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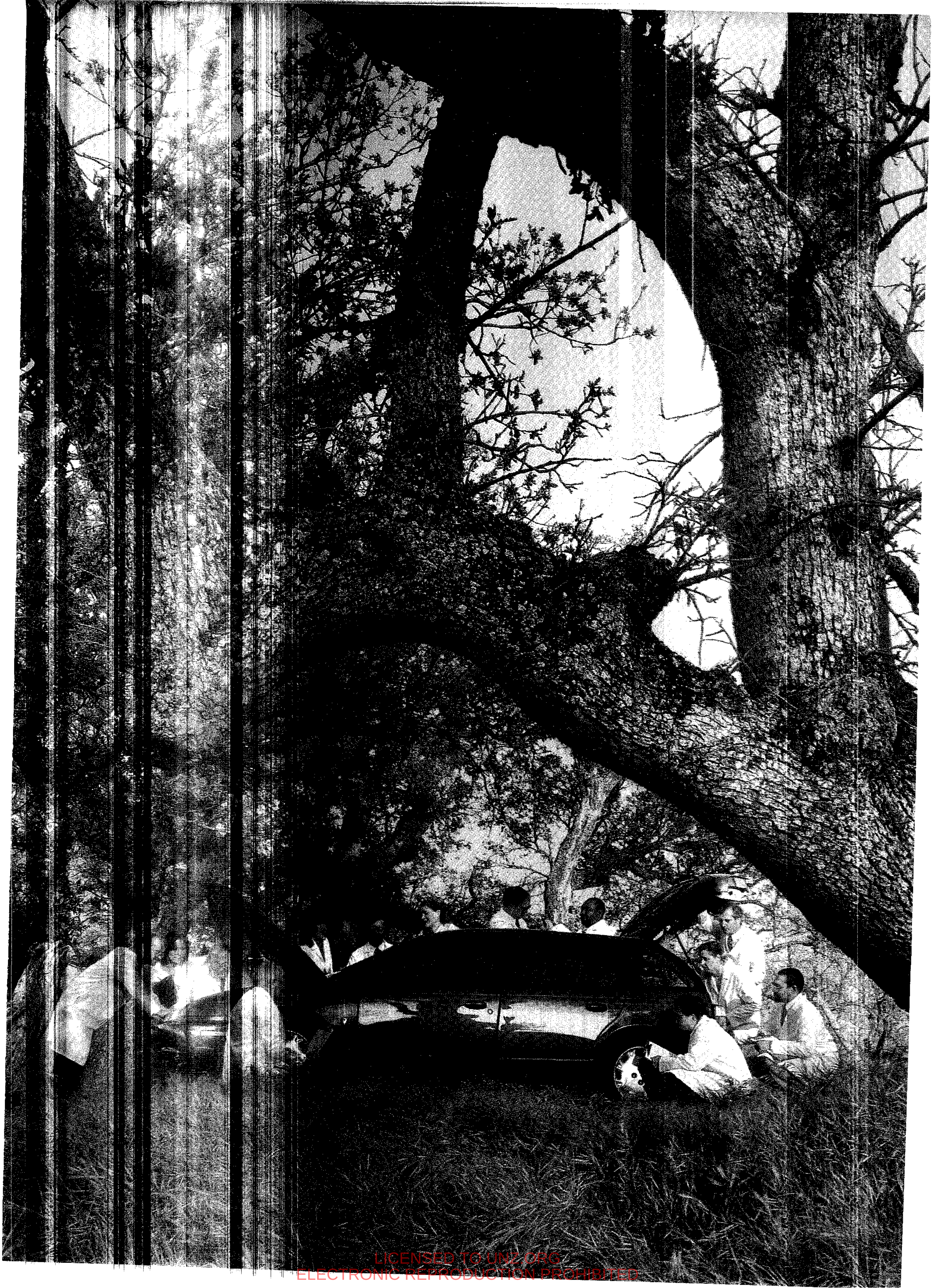

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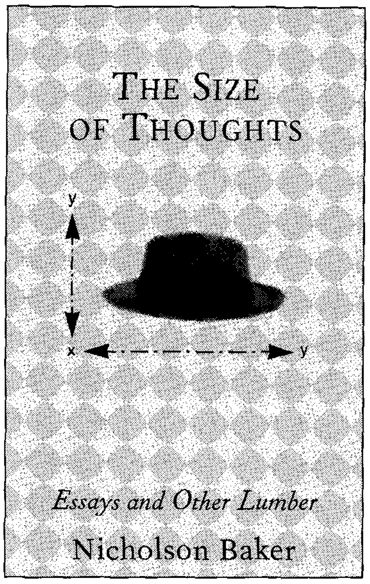

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APRIL 8, 1996

COMMENT Domestic Tranquillity . . . . *Jeffrey Frank* 5
Reasons to celebrate a suddenly dull election.

IN THE MAIL 8

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 12

THE TALK OF THE TOWN . . . . *Anthony Lane* 31
Oscar stars before and after; awards not presented; etc.

DEPARTMENTS

Our Local Correspondents The Life Preserver . . . . *James Traub* 47
For those who want to keep New Yorkers off death row,
the new capital defender knows how to do it.

Dept. of Disputation Mad Cows and Englishmen . . . . *Simon Schama* 61
William Hogarth and the meaning of British beef.

Annals of Religion Blood and Tears . . . . *Marina Warner* 63
The Catholic Church has a new problem: Italy's
weeping Madonna and other millennial miracles.

PROFILE King of Cats . . . . *Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* 70
What has the critic and novelist Albert Murray
inspired in generations of black intellectuals?

ARTIST AT LARGE Nights at the Circus . . . . *James McMullan* 76

PERSONAL HISTORY How I Became a Single Woman . . . . *Alison Rose* 82
Tales of a romantic in the city.

FICTION "Mother with Child" . . . . *Jonathan Wilson* 92
A Dead Sea outing.

THE CRITICS

Books The rush for global solutions . . . . *Philip Gourevitch* 96
The poetry of August Kleinzahler and Mark Doty . . . . *Helen Vendler* 100
Briefly Noted 102
The Theatre "The Night of the Iguana" . . . . *Nancy Franklin* 103
The Current Cinema "Sgt. Bilko," Krzysztof Kieślowski . . . . *Anthony Lane* 106
Musical Events Dawn Upshaw's Lenten recitals . . . . *Paul Griffiths* 108

POEMS

"Sometimes, at Night" . . . . *Lucy Cores* 65
"In Late February" . . . . *Eamon Grennan* 74
"What Is a Garden" . . . . *W. S. Merwin* 88

SHOUTS & MURMURS Flat Tax Return . . . . *Bruce McCall* 110

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Clinton beats Dole, Dole beats Clinton: either way, we'll probably survive.

LAST Tuesday, California's winner-take-all primary gave Senator Bob Dole the remaining delegates he needed to secure his party's Presidential nomination. (Bill Clinton didn't need to go over the top; he started there.) With that, the campaign, after a two-month blur of activity and attention, returned to its pre-Iowa torpor, there to remain, no doubt, until the approach of the Conventions, this summer. What the voters have been left with, besides a certain empty feeling, is something that should perhaps be regarded as a gift: the prospect of an Election Day that will prompt few of them to wake up screaming the next morning.

It seems only yesterday—perhaps because it was only yesterday, or, at any rate, only a month or so ago—that all sorts of less desirable outcomes appeared possible. The soberest political writers were telling us that the victory of Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr., a.k.a. Steve, in the Delaware primary "likely guarantees" that he would "continue indefinitely" his quest to prove that money is not only the mother's milk of politics but also its chardonnay and Geritol. It seemed that the nation's investigative journalists might have to ruin their eyes poring over the details of the business partnership between Lamar Alexander, the former Tennessee governor, and Bob Keeshan, the former Captain Kangaroo. A few apocalyptic analysts even imagined a brimstone-flavored confrontation between President Clinton and Patrick J. Buchanan. On the morning after Dole's marginal win in Iowa, one prominent commentator suggested that he might be doomed to "join the pantheon of political losers like Edmund Muskie and John Connally," and after Buchanan won his Granite State plurality a network anchor declared, "*Terrified* is the best description of the Party's establishment."

We are a long way from terror now; instead, a soothing calm is settling over the land as Dole and Clinton prepare for the Conventions and their sequel. In ways that we may be unable fully to appreciate until, someday, we look back at this year from what is bound to be a more unsettled future, the 1996 election seems wonderfully, reassuringly safe.

In the past, as often as not, Presidential elections seemed distinctly unsafe—even terrifying—to millions of citizens; the possibility that this or that candidate might actually move into the White House regularly prompted cries of despair or avowals of imminent emigration to Canada. That phenomenon—the fearfulness that has accompanied so many such face-offs—has been commonplace in the latter part

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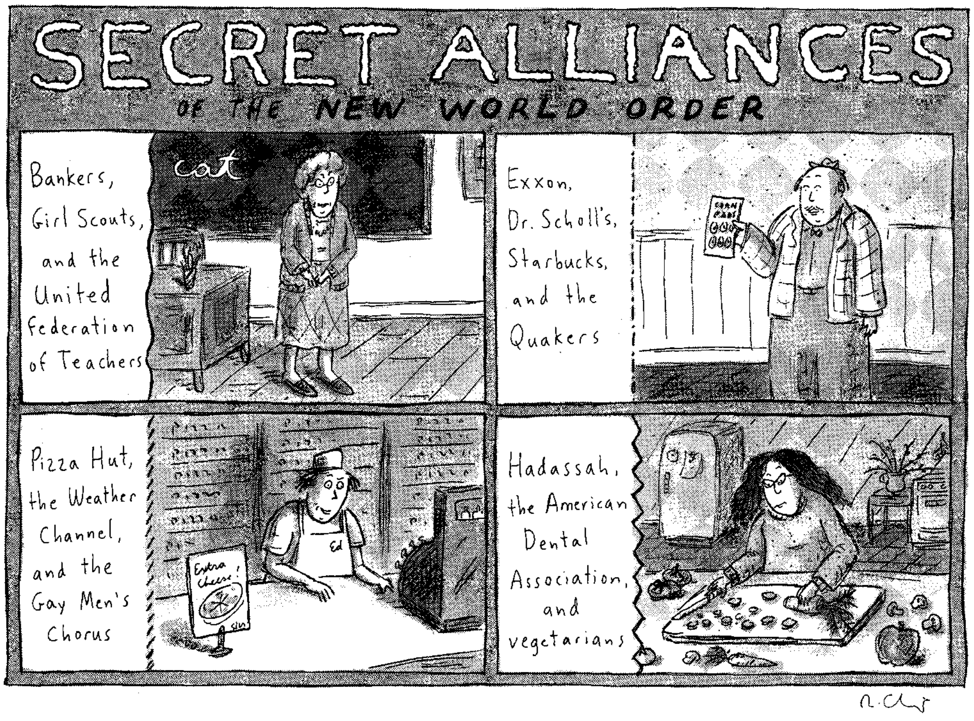
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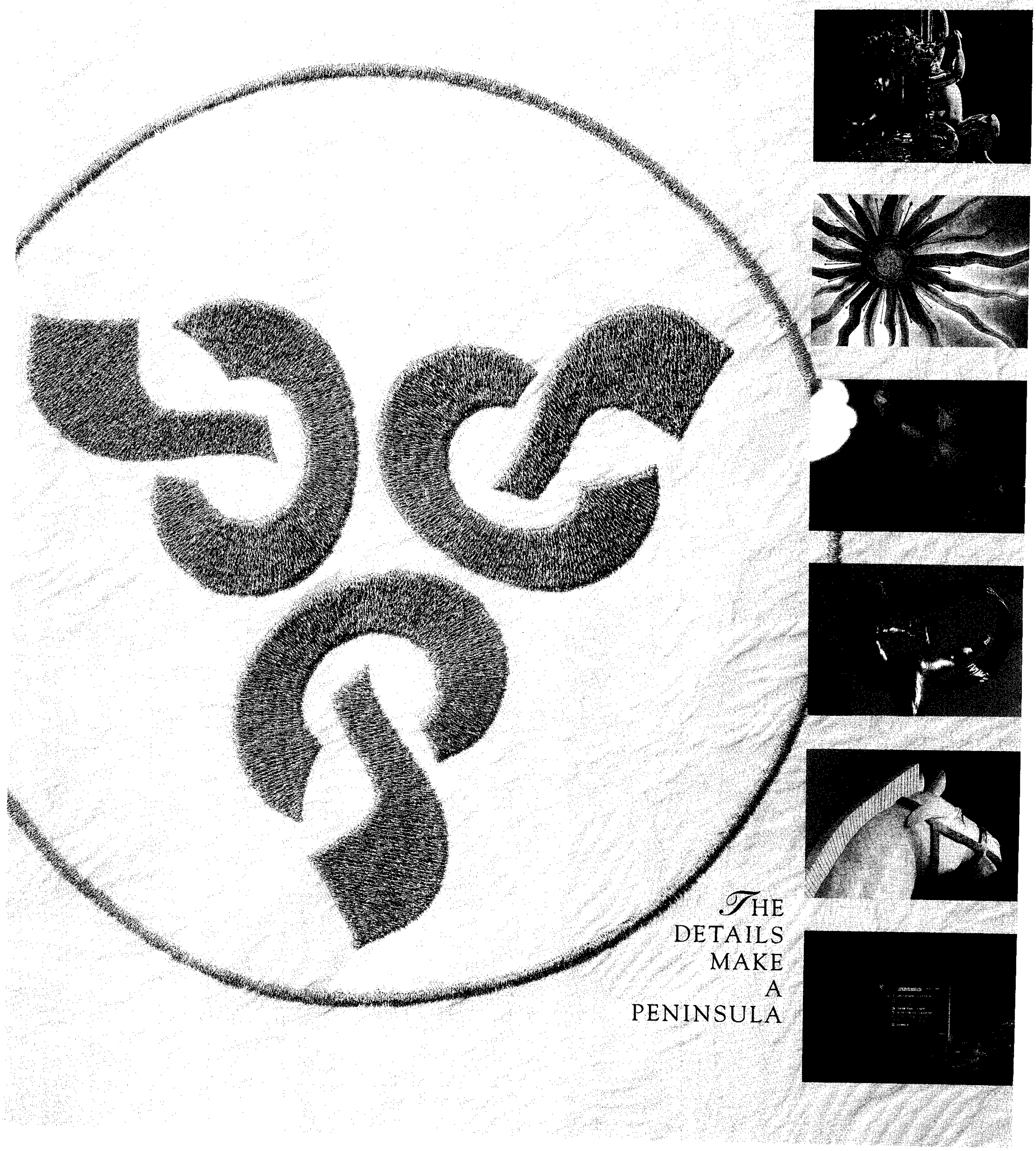
of the twentieth century, following those idyllic contests between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson in the fifties. Among the races that most alarmed certain voters of both parties were those between Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater (1964), Richard Nixon and George McGovern (1972), and Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan (1980), but other modern elections also managed to give many of us the willies. Nixon, long before the scandals that finished his Presidency, was regarded as an archfiend by many Democrats; in 1976, Carter looked weird and exotic, even to Democrats, spurring some of them to try to scare up a late candidacy for Hubert Humphrey. And four years ago many voters were unnerved by Clinton.

Today, there is nothing weird or alarming about Clinton or Dole. Even voters who simply cannot bear the sight or sound of the President have learned the contours of his failings, and have taken comfort in knowing that, at the very worst, his tenure will be over by January 20, 2001. The dislike of Clinton tends to be personal—reminiscent of the sort of thing that was said a hundred years ago about William Jennings Bryan. ("He is a boy orator. He is a dishonest dodger. He is a daring adventurer. He is a political faker," Henry Watterson, of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, wrote then.) Similarly, there is no mystery to Bob Dole; if you feel a little queasy about the prospect of the Senate Majority Leader in the White House, you can at least be fairly sure that he would not, in his semi-memorable phrase, "lead you off a cliff." In a newspaper interview the other day, when Dole was asked why he wants to be President, he replied, "I've watched Presidents come and go. I've looked at their strengths and weaknesses. . . . My view is steady, firm leadership. We can get some of these things done, whether it's a balanced budget that will lower interest rates a couple of percentage points or tax cuts or regulatory reform or downsizing government." Throw in a bit of bloviating alliteration, and this is not very different from the tone Warren G. Harding struck in 1920, when he promised to give the nation "not heroics but healing, not nostrums but normalcy, not revolution but restoration, not agitation but adjustment, not surgery but serenity."

While political writers are growing fond of pointing out that Clinton and Dole both inhabit a great middle ground, the candidates' distance from their parties' ideological edges (a longer haul in Clinton's case than in Dole's) hardly makes them identical. Among other differences, Dole would sign bills that Clinton would veto, such as the preposterous repeal of the ban on assault weapons which was approved by the House last month. And the furies on the sidelines aren't about to go away. The calming sight of two professional politicians (Clinton and Dole, between them, have more than sixty years of experience in the trade) cannot quite obscure the spectacle of such excitable amateurs as Buchanan and Ross Perot. (When Perot was asked recently what he'd do if he were tapped to run for President he said, "I will cut the grass, I will take out the trash, I will sleep under a bridge." You can't keep a good troll down.)

Yet what we have with Dole and Clinton is at least a momentary return to the sort of two-party system that Walter Lippmann once praised for being nothing of the kind. Lippmann declared that the system worked so well in the United States because the differences between Democrats and Republicans were bridgeable. "Although it is the custom of partisans to speak as if there were radical differences between the Ins and Outs . . . in stable and mature societies the differences are necessarily not profound," he wrote in "The Phantom Public," published in 1925. "If they were profound, the defeated minority would be constantly on the verge of rebellion. An election would be catastrophic, whereas the assumption in every election is that the victors will do nothing to make life intolerable to the vanquished and that the vanquished will endure with good humor policies which they do not approve." A year ago, when Newt Gingrich's revolutionaries were all aglow, that assumption could not be made. Now it can be, cautiously.

The missing chapter of this somewhat plodding narrative is Dole's eventual choice of a running mate. Happily, it's not in his nature to alarm voters, so it's all but unimaginable that he would make a scary, Quayle-like choice; he senses that part of the appeal of his "last mission" is the promise of steadiness. The nation may not be exhilarated by steadiness but should welcome it while it's here. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., notes in his essay on the "cycles" of our politics, "A nation's capacity for high-tension political commitment is limited. Nature insists on a respite." For this respite, anyway, let us yawn with gratitude. —JEFFREY FRANK



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IN THE MAIL

WOMEN'S ISSUES

The ongoing tar-and-feather-Hillary show (explained in "Hating Hillary," by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., February 26th & March 4th) does not bode well for those of us other wives and mothers who want to move freely and publicly—without becoming a moving target—outside the home. Hillary may not be perfect (indeed, her greatest fault may be her need to be), but, please, ladies, isn't it time we gave our nineties national scapegoat—and so ourselves—a well-earned break? At the level of scrutiny she's subjected to, I, for one, am not sure I'd look that much better.

SUZANNE SELBY GRENAGER
Lewisberry, Pa.

When I look across the aisle at the mother superior of the Republican Party, William Bennett, who is self-righteous and sanctimonious but remains unscathed (except for a few snickers here and there), it becomes clear that Hillary Rodham Clinton has gone beyond the pale as it was constructed for women within the Beltway.

NORMAN DOUGLAS
Milford, Conn.

A few years ago, my daughter played the title role in a college production of "The Heidi Chronicles." The cast had difficulty understanding the feminist support-group scene—they couldn't grasp how a discussion about whether to shave one's legs could be of serious feminist import, and I found that I wasn't equal to the task of explaining it to them. Jane Kramer's Personal History ("The Invisible Woman," February 26th & March 4th) said all that I was unable to say about the sometimes silly, sometimes profound feminist discussions of the early seventies, eloquently articulating my generation's experience of feminism.

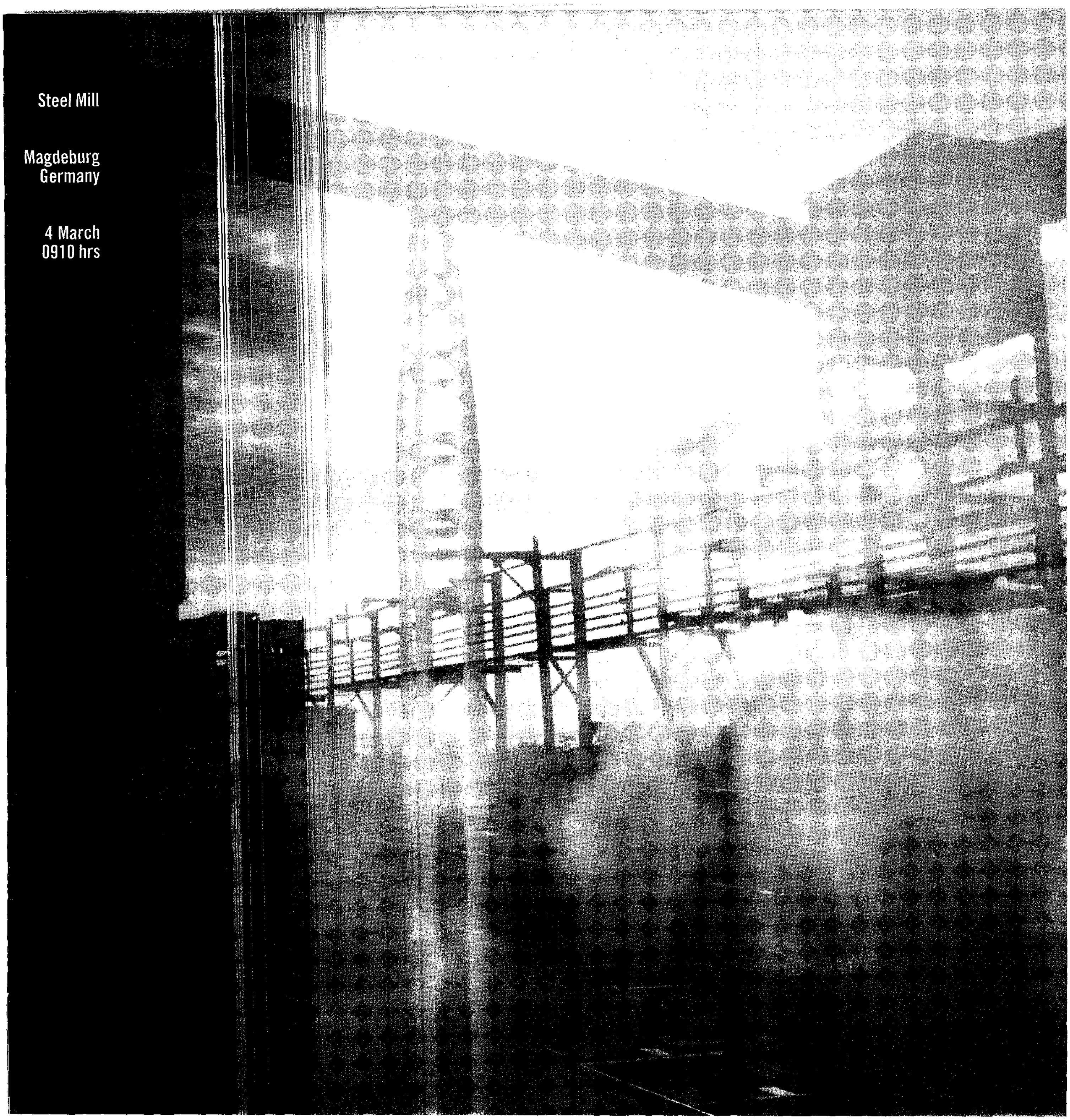
SHERRY H. JONES
Belmont, Mass.

Are women being told they must make a choice that no man has to make? Must we give up sex in order to have a voice? In praising women who "maintained . . . their power by having forsworn . . . seduction," Francine du Plessix Gray (in "The Third Age," February 26th & March 4th) appears to believe that a woman's greatest (and perhaps only) power is the power to withhold sex from a man who wants it. Gray's view resembles that of the people in the Moroccan village described in the same issue by Jane Kramer: virgins have power relative to their desirability, old women are free to express themselves, and sexually active women (who are feared) must be controlled. A woman's body is not a zero-sum game. Life is richest when body, mind, and voice are used to the fullest.

JANET HAYS
New York City

Ms. Gray concedes that there are women who remain sexually active into their eighties, but she writes, "Few of them have raised their voices to praise the delights of a prolonged libido." As a woman close to eighty, I cannot resist this invitation. After several years of widowhood, last year I met a man with whom I had a passionate as well as an intellectually exciting relationship. We married, and, among other things, started to do research together for an article on art and poetry. Then, late in the year, he had a heart attack and died. My despair can be imagined. I got through the holidays with my daughter's help, and I have continued the research we had barely begun. But I know that my pleasure in this research is not an alternative to erotic pleasure: both are important to me. Sexuality in women of postmenstrual age is not in competition with keen insight and self-reliance.

IRMA B. JAFFE
New York City



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You did women of faith a disservice by including Mary Daly's Personal History ("Sin Big") in your Women's Issue. Daly doesn't practice theology; she practices "me-ology." Take away the fancy language and silly ritual, and what's left? Self-centered bragging and whining. In the real world of the local congregation, where theology is practiced daily, her work is irrelevant. Thank God.

REV. KAREN BOOTH
Long Neck United Methodist Church
Long Neck, Del.

I am disappointed that you chose to include "Unlikely Obsession," by Daphne Merkin, in your special Women's Issue. Merkin chronicles her secret fascination with "erotic discipline," particularly the idea of being spanked with various instruments by men. She seems to suggest that this hidden desire for "degradation" and "the brute strictures of submission and dominance" is common among women, especially in these "times that encourage sexual parity." You could hardly have chosen a more dangerous or corrosive myth to reinforce than the notion that women are aroused by abuse. I look at Annie Leibovitz's photographs, "Faces of Abuse," in the same issue, and wonder if the men who beat those women similarly believe that for women violence is sex.

LANCE L. ROCKWELL
Denver, Colo.

I opened the Women's Issue with anticipation. I hoped to find myself within its pages in the same way that, returning to familiar neighborhoods, I look for glimpses of my younger self around each corner. There was a little of this in the issue and a little of that, some pieces that were interesting and vivid, others that were mundane and perplexing, but when I closed the magazine I felt vaguely, naggingly unsatisfied. I hadn't recognized myself in any of it; I was a stranger in my own neighborhood. Perhaps that's what it means to be a woman today.

TAJ MOSES
San Jose, Calif.

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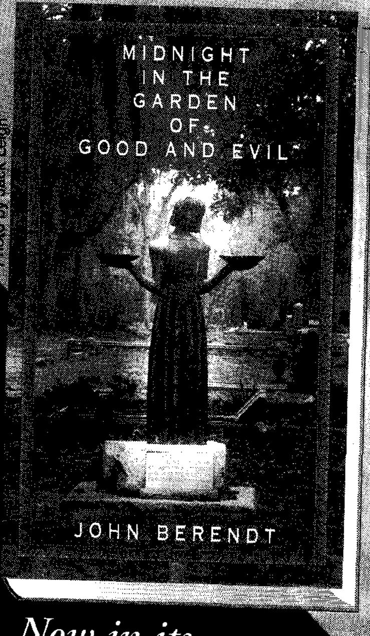

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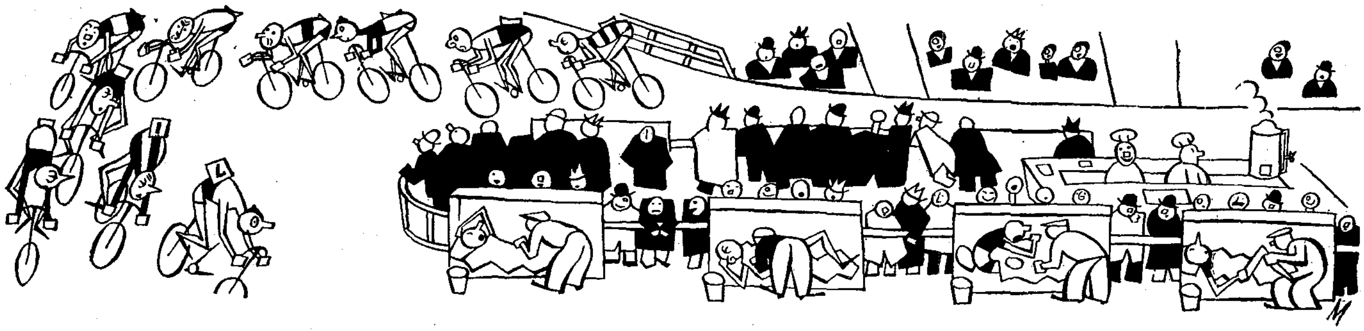

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Apple Doesn't Fall—The overbearing mother (Florence Stanley) of an overachieving SWF (Margaret Whitton) develops Alzheimer's disease, in a new comedy-drama by Trish Vradenburg. Leonard Nimoy is the director. In previews. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Big—A new musical by John Weidman (book), Richard Maltby, Jr. (lyrics), and David Shire (music), based on the 1988 movie. Directed by Mike Ockrent, with choreography by Susan Stroman. Previews begin April 8. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Boar's Carcass—A married man gets a response to his personals ad, in a new thriller by Stephanie Dickinson. Previews begin April 9. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Charlie!—There's intrigue in the cosmetics industry, in Theatre Couture's new musical comedy, starring Sherry Vine, Misstress Formika, and Candis Cayne. Preview on April 4. Opens April 5 at 7:30 and continues, Thursdays through Sundays, through April 28. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

A Delicate Balance—Lincoln Center Theatre presents Edward Albee's 1966 unbalanced-family drama. With John Carter, George Grizzard, Rosemary Harris, Mary Beth Hurt, Elaine Stritch, and Elizabeth Wilson. Directed by Gerald Gutierrez. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Don Juan Comes Back from the War—The Classic Stage Company presents the German playwright Ödön von Horváth's version of the rake's tale, in a translation by Ralph Manheim and Sean Allan. Previews begin April 8. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—A revival of the 1962 Stephen Sondheim-Burt Shevelove-Larry Gelbart musical, starring Nathan Lane as the Roman slave Pseudolus. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with choreography by Rob Marshall. In previews. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The King and I—Lou Diamond Phillips is the king of Siam and Donna Murphy his children's English governess in a revival of the 1950 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. Christopher Renshaw directs. In previews. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Sha*Bang—A bevy of beauties, including Charles Busch, Lypsinka, the "Lady" Bunny, John Kelly, and Penny Arcade, perform in a benefit variety show. One night only: April 6 at 8. (Alice Tully Hall. 294-8125.)

Sunset Salome—Thespians at the Whispering Sands Hospital for the Criminally Insane cook up a musical version of the Biblical tale, in a new play by Peter Wing Healey (libretto) and Max Kinberg (music), presented by the Mesopotamian Opera Company. Previews April 5-6. Opens April 7 at 3:30. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Zombie Prom—A new nineteen-fifties rock-and-roll musical. In previews through April 8. Opens April 9 at 8. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Andrea Martin and **Marga Gomez**—Two solo shows: "Nude Nude Totally Nude," Martin's new multicharacter comedy, and "A Line Around the Block," Gomez's tribute to her father, the Cuban entertainer Willy Chevalier. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Bein' with Behan—In his portrayal of the late poet, playwright, and political activist Brendan Behan, the talented and hardworking Irish actor Michael L. Kavanagh pauses only long enough to take the occasional gargle of Guinness. But the audience doesn't have the solace of a pint during this formulaic two-hour pub monologue, and while Kavanagh clearly knows the terrain and characters whereof he speaks, a lad might do better to take his Behan straight. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 279-4200.)

SABINA
FREUD
JUNG

George Bartenieff, Marin Hinkle, and Kenneth L. Marks, in "Sabina," at Primary Stages.

Below the Belt—Richard Dresser's brilliant dark comedy is set in "an industrial compound in a distant land," but it hits close to home in its dead-on absurdist take on modern life. Judd Hirsch, Robert Sean Leonard, and Jude Ciccolella are three men who work for a company that makes "units." (Units of what, you ask? Don't ask.) Dresser's dialogue sharply and resonantly limns their paranoia. You may wish for slightly sharper performances from the actors, but the production, under the direction of Gloria Muzio, especially the vividly drab set and costumes, is nevertheless very satisfying. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Bomber Jackets—Patrick (Alex Furth), a member of a gang pledged to keeping its Bay Ridge neighborhood free of graffiti, drugs, and gays, finds himself—to his horror—intrigued with a transvestite who has moved in. Naturally, tragedy ensues, but there is nothing predictable in it. Each of the factions competing for Patrick's loyalty is equally well drawn, and it's unclear who the victim will be. The characters are sometimes bafflingly underwritten and the translation from the Spanish is a little too clever, but thanks to an entirely believable cast this production of Rob Santana's new play makes a powerful point about the visceral nature of stereotypes and the wrench it takes to get beyond them. Directed by Alba Oms. Performances are in English Wednesdays through Fridays and in Spanish on Saturdays and Sundays. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes April 21.)

Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk—Director George C. Wolfe and dancer-choreographer Savion Glover's heroically energetic musical, which charts the evolution of the African-American beat from its rural Southern beginnings to its Northern urbanization and on to its present hip-hop incarnation, is moving to Broadway. Preview performances begin at the Ambassador on April 9. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/4/95.) (219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

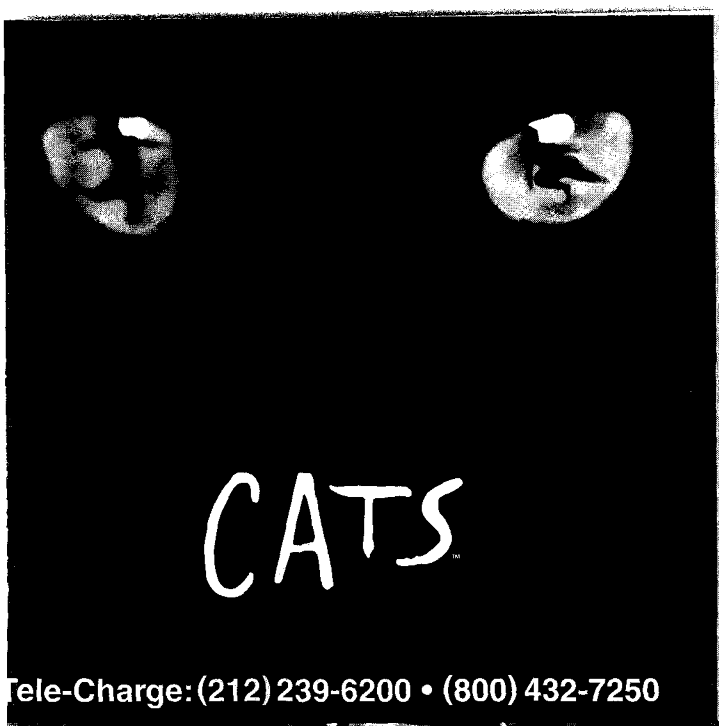
Chicago City Limits—The improv company presents "What You Said," a revue featuring its ever-popular five-minute musical. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

Cowgirls—Country and classical collide in a new musical comedy, in which a country-music hall mistakenly books a chamber trio for its grand reopening. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—Presenting an evening of one-acts by David Mamet: "A Sermon," "Almost Done," "Sunday Afternoon," "Joseph Dintenfass," and "No One Will Be Immune." (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. Closes April 7.)

A Fair Country—In John Robin Baitz's new play, the personal and the political are inextricably bound up in the plight of the family of an American diplomat in South Africa and The Hague. Laurence Luckinbill, as the well-meaning liberal Harry Burgess (that surname, with its echo of betrayal, is no accident), sets in motion an unseen but horrifying course of events when

KIT KEITH



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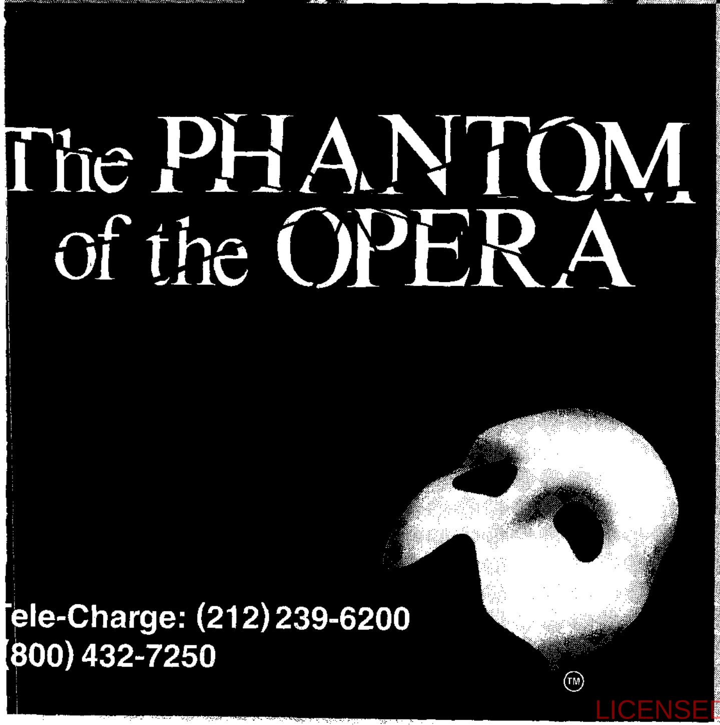
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he takes steps to keep his family from disintegrating. Thematically, the play, directed by Daniel Sullivan, is a very neat package, but emotionally it rings hollow, and it isn't helped by uneven performances from Judith Ivey, Matt McGrath, and Dan Futterman. The set, however, marks yet another triumph for the ever-resourceful Tony Walton. (3/11/96) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Forbidden Hollywood—The revue format of Gerard Alessandrini's movie-biz sendup is by nature hit or miss. The many hits include a sloshed Pat and Dick Nixon going on about Oliver Stone. The most conspicuous miss is an impersonation of Demi Moore, whose imperviousness to caricature says much about the nature of her stardom. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

How He Lied to Her Husband and **Village Wooing**—The National Asian-American Theatre Company presents two one-acts by Shaw. (Vineyard's 26th St. Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 505-3003. Closes April 14.)

I Do! I Do!—Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt's 1964 musical comedy about marriage. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Inherit the Wind—George C. Scott and Charles Durning go head to head in a National Actors Theatre revival of the 1955 drama about the Scopes "monkey trial." Directed by John Tillinger. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

Life Is a Dream—Calderón's 1635 drama, about a prince imprisoned by his father since birth, in a Pearl Theatre Company production. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

The Looking Lass—A satire, à la Lewis Carroll, of the 1996 Presidential campaigns. Written by Thana Spangler. April 4 at 9. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

Love Thy Neighbor—Jackie Mason returns to Broadway, with the Boys Choir of Harlem, in a new one-man show (of sorts). (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Master Class—In Terrence McNally's latest play, Zoe Caldwell plays Maria Callas with steely, divaesque conviction, but the role is merely the sum of all the clichés that have been in circulation for years; the Callas who was a consummate professional and an inspired teacher—and a human being—is missing. Leonard Foglia directed. (11/27/95) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Royal Shakespeare Company brings the comedy to town for a ten-week engagement. Directed by Adrian Noble. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Mrs. Klein—Two London psychoanalysts—the famous Melanie Klein (Uta Hagen) and her less renowned daughter, Melitta (Laila Robins)—face off in a murderous argument and proceed to browbeat each other with theory. Nicholas Wright's smart though schematic drama dissects Klein's tempestuous relationship with her high-strung daughter and shrewdly explores the autobiographical parallels to Klein's seminal thesis on the effects of parental neglect. Robins is excellent; Hagen is brilliant. (11/20/95) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Molly Sweeney—Brian Friel's 1994 play owes much to an Oliver Sacks case study, but Friel didn't reimagine the material, and the play, which he directed, comes across as a staged reading of an essay. The actors sit or stand and address the audience, and they all end up overexplaining themselves.

T. Michael Gardiner

The Royal Shakespeare Company's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

(1/29/96) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Night of the Iguana—Cherry Jones, Marsha Mason, and William Petersen star in the Roundabout Theatre's revival of Tennessee Williams's 1961 play. Directed by Robert Falls. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Nixon's Nixon—On the eve of his resignation, the thirty-seventh President and his secretary of state uncork the brandy decanter and spill a few secrets about power as they have known it. The script, by Russell Lees, has its share of dead spots, but the performers—Gerry Bamman as Nixon and Steve Mellor as Kissinger—are always engaging and sometimes masterful. Directed by Jim Simpson. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 315-2244.)

No Exit—The Independent Theatre Company presents Sartre's 1945 existentialist drama. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

The One-Minute Play Contest—A fun and frenzied competition in which audience enthusiasm and a decibel metre decide which one-minute drama gets the fifty-dollar award at the end of each six-play heat; the full evening consists of eight heats, with the grand prize (two hundred clams) going to the highest scorer. Everyone leaves a little richer. April 8 at 8. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 279-4200.)

Overtime—A. R. Gurney's latest, a modern "sequel" to "The Merchant of Venice," asks the Rodney King question, "Can we all get along?" This time around, Portia (wonderfully played by Joan McMurtrey) is an echt-Wasp party giver, Salerio (the excellent Robert Stanton) an uptight accountant in a Brooks Brothers suit, Shylock (Nicholas Kepros) a sweet old mensch—you get the picture. Gurney takes aim at every imaginable stereotype, and about half the time he hits his target. Nicholas Martin directed. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes April 14.)

Picasso at the Lapin Agile—Set in a Paris bar in 1904, Steve Martin's comedy features Einstein and Picasso sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world. It contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor—but there's a certain sourness to the proceedings which may put you off. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Rent—Inspired by Puccini's "La Bohème," the late Jonathan Larson's rock opera, set in a gray and dishevelled East Village loft space, stands every assumption of the traditional musical on its head. It can't support the narrative overload (eight separate stories are told), yet by the end of the evening Larson's talent has taken the audience to places where the musical never ventures these days. The play's downtown run has ended; it moves to Broadway's Nederlander Theatre on April 16. (2/19/96)

Repertorio Español—Performances of "El Cano" ("The Blond Man"), Louis Delgado's drama about an ambitious Puerto Rican who allows his boss to believe he is Italian, run in repertory with "Café con Leche," a comedy by Gloria Gonzalez; ". . . Y Se Armó la Mojiganga!" (". . . And the Carnival Erupted!"), Jorge Alí Triana's musical based on a Colombian folktale; and "La Gringa," Carmen Rivera's comedy about a woman's first trip to Puerto Rico to meet her relatives. In Spanish; simultaneous English translation is available. (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Sabina—Willy Holtzman has based this ambitious, intelligent new drama on Aldo Carotenuto's 1982 book, "A Secret Symmetry," which revealed Sabina Spielrein's previously all but unknown contributions to Carl Jung's work. The psychoanalyst's first private patient, she went on to become not only his protégée and lover but also a brilliant exponent of Freud. Holtzman offers poetic insights into ways that the two men's theories augured the behavior that would allow them to betray her. In spite of some necessarily turgid jargon, the drama re-creates the analytic process beautifully, thanks to a sleek production, elegant direction by Melia Bensussen, and some fine performances, especially by Marin Hinkle, in the title role, and David Adkins, as the analyst Ludwig Binswanger. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes April 21.)

Seven Guitars—August Wilson's new play, set in Pittsburgh in 1948, examines the final days in the life of a blues guitarist (Keith David). Lloyd Richards is the director. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Shattering—A family's naïve support of a third-party Presidential candidate brings about its collapse. Written by Mark R. Shapiro. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

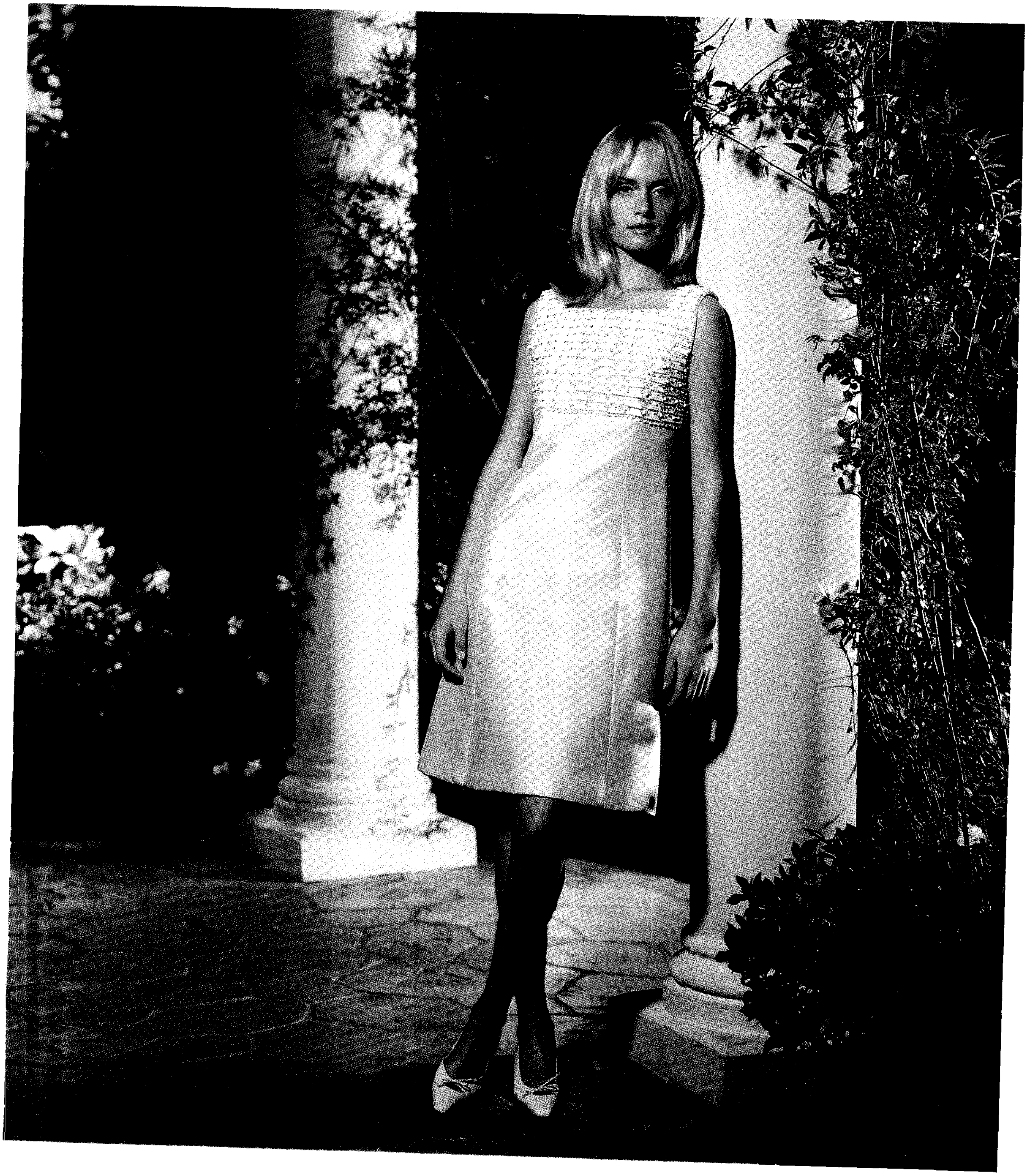
The Size of the World—A new comedy by Charles Evered, in which an eccentric New Jersey family alters a young man's notion of the American Dream. With Rita Moreno, Frank Whaley, and Louis Zorich. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200. Closes April 7.)

State Fair—A stage version of the 1945 Rodgers and Hammerstein movie musical. Directed by James Hammerstein and Randy Skinner. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Sun Dialogues—The Adobe Theatre Company presents a play by David Hollander, about a Hollywood script reader. (46 Walker St. 560-7387. Closes April 6.)

Tartuffe—The Jean Cocteau Repertory presents Richard Wilbur's translation of Molière's 1664 comedy, which will run in rotation

T MICHAEL GARDINER



CHANEL

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with Shaw's "Major Barbara." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Victor; or, Children Take Over—The Arden Party Theatre Company presents the French Surrealist Roger Vitrac's satire of nineteen-twenties bourgeois society. Directed by Karen Coonrod. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 969-0551.)

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews, Tony Roberts, and Michael Nouri star in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. The score (by Henry Mancini) is generic, and the book (by Blake Edwards, who also directed) is patchwork. The leggy Rachel York, as a blond bimbo, at least enjoys herself—and the audience enjoys her, too. (11/20/95) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Virgins and Other Myths—Colin Martin's one-man play—a sort of "This Gay Boy's Life"—is an explicit though graceful dive into the depths of his own psyche. The show's run at Primary Stages has ended; it moves to the Atlantic on April 12.

Working Title—A screenwriter tries to hold his crumbling career and marriage together, in a new comedy by Andrew Bergman. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes April 17.)

LONG RUNS

After-play: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **Beauty and the Beast:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **Blue Man Group/Tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **Cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **The Fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **The Food Chain:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **Grandma Sylvia's Funeral:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **Grease!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **Les Misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Miss Saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **Moon Over Buffalo:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Perfect Crime:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Rob Becker's Defending the Caveman:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **Show Boat:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **Smokey Joe's Café:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **Stomp:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **Sunset Boulevard:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **Tony n' Tina's Wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

Dancemakers—The Toronto-based company, under the direction of Serge Bennathan, makes its New York début with the elegiac "Chronicles of a Simple Life," and "Sable/Sand," set to the music of Ahmed Hassan. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. April 2-5 at 8, April 6 at 2 and 8, and April 7 at 2 and 7:30.)

"My House Was Collapsing Toward One Side"—Dancer and performance artist Dawn Akemi Saito and director Charles L. Mee, Jr., collaborate on a full-length work combining Saito's *butoh* dance with texts by a tenth-century Japanese courtesan and testimonials from Hiroshima survivors. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. April 4-6 at 8 and April 7 at 3.)

Copperworks Dance—Penny Vercelline's eight-member company performs three new works ("Breaker," to a Joe Gallant score played by the composer, on contrabass, with his band, Red Dot; "E," which takes its spiral movements from a mathematical principle; and "Gift Horse," about feminine assertiveness) and two repertory works ("Garden" and "Black Elk, the Vision"). (Context Studios, 28 Avenue A, at 3rd St. 777-3394. April 4-6 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Jackson Browne—On his 1976 album, "The Pretender," this former poster boy for the West Coast school of introspective songwriting longed to lift the weight of existence from his shoulders so he could be "a happy idiot and struggle for the legal tender." On his new release, "Looking East," he now says, "I want to live in the world, not inside my head. . . . I want to stand with the hopeful and the willing." It's the story of his career: from a yuppie before his time to a hippie after it. In the words of his old labelmates, welcome to the Hotel California. With singer-songwriter Vonda Shepard. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. April 3 at 8.)

Foo Fighters / The Amps—One of last year's most appealing début albums, "Foo Fighters" was all the more surprising because the music was written by Nirvana's former drummer, the twenty-six-year-old Dave Grohl. Next to Kurt Cobain, with his tortured intensity, Grohl often came off as a toothy goofball, but his work with Foo Fighters proves he's no lightweight. / The Amps are the latest side project of former Pixie bassist Kim Deal. Their recent "Pacer" is a fuzzy, low-fi affair that sounds a lot like the Breeders—without the imagination. But, live, Deal's unpretentious trailer-park-and-mayonnaise sensibility is always a delight. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. April 6 at 7:30.)

Rubén Blades—The Panamanian-born poet laureate of salsa first made a name for himself in the early seventies, with charming songs that found moments of magic in the mundane. In 1975, he teamed up with Willie Colón, the bandleader and future Bronx congressional candidate, who supplied a ferocious musical backdrop for Blades's emotion-filled tenor. The partnership produced such masterworks as "Siembra" (1978), which featured "Pedro Navaja," a clever rewrite of "Mack the Knife." But by the early eighties the duo had run out of steam. In 1984, Blades signed with Elektra, and, backed by his extraordinary ensemble, Seis del Solar, he released "Buscando América," the album that brought Latin music into the electronic age. Blades also began a successful second career as an actor, but his musical work went downhill with the release, in 1985, of "Nothing But the Truth," an English-language album that was stilted and second-rate. Since then his music has been more workmanlike than inspired—perhaps it's the lingering stress of a failed presidential bid in Panama a few years ago. (Beacon Theatre. April 6 at 8.)

Iggy Pop—From the evidence of his startlingly good new album, "Naughty Little Doggie," this unrepentant firebrand ("the world's forgotten boy," he called himself in the early seventies, when virtually no one was paying attention—except the kids who would soon be the Ramones, the Sex Pistols, the Clash, etc.) still knows how to execute his musical search-and-destroy missions. If you doubt it, try listening to songs like "Shoeshine Girl" or "Pussy Walk" without being offended at the same time that you're cracking up. The Godfather of Punk tag isn't adequate any more: after all these years, he's the King of Them All. (Roseland. April 8 at 7:30.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **Julie Wilson** is currently in the midst of an extended run. Dining.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—April 5-6: Some of those who teach, as **Pete Yellin** often proves, can also play. He's the director of jazz studies at Long Island University, and he's also a fine bop-inflected altoist. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through April 7: **Herbie Mann** and the **Gonzalo Rubalcaba** quartet. File Mann alongside Dave Brubeck, Stan Kenton, and the few other lucky players who have enjoyed amazing long-term popularity. His forte seems to be his chameleonlike adaptability—one year he's Latin, the next he's R. & B., the year after that he'll turn up lite rock—but his amiable tooting carpets it all. Pianist Rubalcaba is a virtuoso, and he demonstrates it with cascading phrase after cascading phrase. The **Joe Sample** trio takes over on April 9. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through April 6: **Kenny Barron** leads a trio. Barron may have succeeded too well as the pianist of choice—ubiquity goes hand in hand with being taken for granted. Whatever the drawbacks of popularity and consistency, though, he turns every set into a lesson in unmannered, eloquent improvisation. He may be the most sympathetic accompanist around, but under the spotlight he's a star. With Ben Riley (drums) and Ray Drummond (bass). The piano-and-bass duo of **George Cables** and **Santi Debriano** have the stage from April 8. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**Barbara Cook** is in command of this urbane dinner-and-music room through late April, backed up by her longtime pianist and arranger Wally Harper. Her voice remains almost defiantly that of the nineteen-fifties Broadway ingénue, and her material is as winning as a fresh corsage. . . .¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, pianist **Peter Mintun** is in attendance.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through April 7: the **Ahmad Jamal** trio. Instead of mellowing with time, Jamal keeps getting more eccentric. A charming minimalist back in the fifties, the pianist has metamorphosed into an expansive extrovert with his own game plan of stop-and-start rhythms, mood-swing digressions, and catch-me-if-you-can shenanigans with his sidemen. What holds all this perversely fascinating stuff together is technique. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass figurine lamps.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—**John Zorn and Masada** are in the midst of a two-week stand. From Benny Goodman and Stan Getz to Ziggy Ellman and Al Cohn, jazz has been home to prominent Jewish musicians who play in an idiomatically correct manner. The Masada ensemble examines Jewish musical traditions in an improvisatory climate. While Eastern European klezmer and the free jazz of Ornette Coleman aren't often mentioned in the same breath, in Zorn's hands their similarities—wrenching dirges, polyphony, modal melodies both lyrical and feverish—cohere and form a new music. Swollen with deep folk spirit but completely unsentimental, the project blends Zorn's gift for experimentation and play with his abiding (if often twisted) reverence for tradition. Using the same pianoless instrumentation as the classic early Coleman units, Masada is made up of serious improvisers—Zorn on alto sax, Greg Cohen on bass, Joey Barron on drums, and Dave Douglas on trumpet—who turn out this warped roots music with conviction and (dare we say the word below Houston Street?) love.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. At the start of his career, in the postwar forties and fifties, **Vic Damone** (through late April) embodied the placid opulence of the era: he was polite and handsome, and his voice was as smooth and lustrous as silk taffeta (and just as stiff). He had a little success in Hollywood and a bit more on vinyl, but more than anything else it's the years of supper clubs and casinos that have given him the distinctive ease that all the Bill Murrays and Harry Connicks of the world can only parody or covet. He doesn't swing, but his phrasing is conversational, and the voice itself is still something to marvel at. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through April 7: the **ABRAHAM BURTON** quartet. Burton is a robust stylist who combines Jackie McLean's verve with Pete Brown's bluesy rigor. **PAUL MOTIAN** gets the nod starting April 9. Motian's two-guitar-and-two-sax lineup is far more successful than you'd think. A smart selection of tunes, from Parker and Mingus classics to the drummer's own moody originals, gets a serious and energetic treatment. This is not fusion. Repeat: this is not fusion. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—The Chestnut Room may resemble a hunting lodge decorated by Liberace, but the performances here are no joke. Vocalist Buddy Greco sings through mid-April. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through April 7: the **ROY HAYNES** quartet. Having played with Lester Young, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane, Haynes could easily afford to rest on his laurels. Instead, the drummer has made his role as elder statesman an active one, nurturing new talent and handing down the secrets of leading an airtight small group. He's now one of the few remaining first-generation bop drummers. The **GEORGE COLEMAN** quintet takes over on April 9. Coleman is a marvel: there isn't a sax player who knows his instrument better, or one who imparts so much knowledge in every marathon solo. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Saxophonist **WILLIE WILLIAMS** (April 9) is a graduate of Arthur Taylor's informal jazz school—in other words, he swings hard. He has a tough, taut sound that can pierce a club's walls.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. Through April 6: piano, bass, and sax with **JUNIOR MANCE, CALVIN HILL,** and **JOE TEMPERLEY.**

ROCK, ETC.

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—April 3-4: **ALTAN.** It's hard to imagine traditional Celtic music sounding any more vital. Formed in the late eighties by the Belfast-born flutist Frankie Kennedy and the Donegal fiddler and heart-melting singer Mairéad Ni Mhaonaigh, this electrifying supergroup from Dublin has continued to set new standards for Irish music. (Considering that this is a field that, like bluegrass, takes technical excellence for granted, that's nothing to shake a shillelagh at.) The band's soon-to-be-released "Blackwater" is its first new album since Kennedy's death, from cancer, in 1994, and it has a spirit of near-mystical rededication which is epitomized in "A Tune for Frankie," Ni Mhaonaigh's movingly bittersweet jig for her late husband. With heavyweights Paul Brady and Seamus Egan also scheduled for these shows, you'd best hang on to your Guinness. April 5: **WRITERS IN THE ROUND.** This new series—consisting of panels of singer-songwriters sitting around doing their own stuff and discussing it—promises less scripted chatter and more songs than its predecessor, "In Their Own Words." The current arrangement begins with a bang: curators **RICHARD BARONE** and **JULES SHEAR** are joined by **JILL SOBULE** and **FREEDY JOHNSTON,** and a surprise guest rounds out the circle. According to Barone, "We're going to feature songs that were written in the last week, or even that very day."

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—April 6: Sleepyhead.

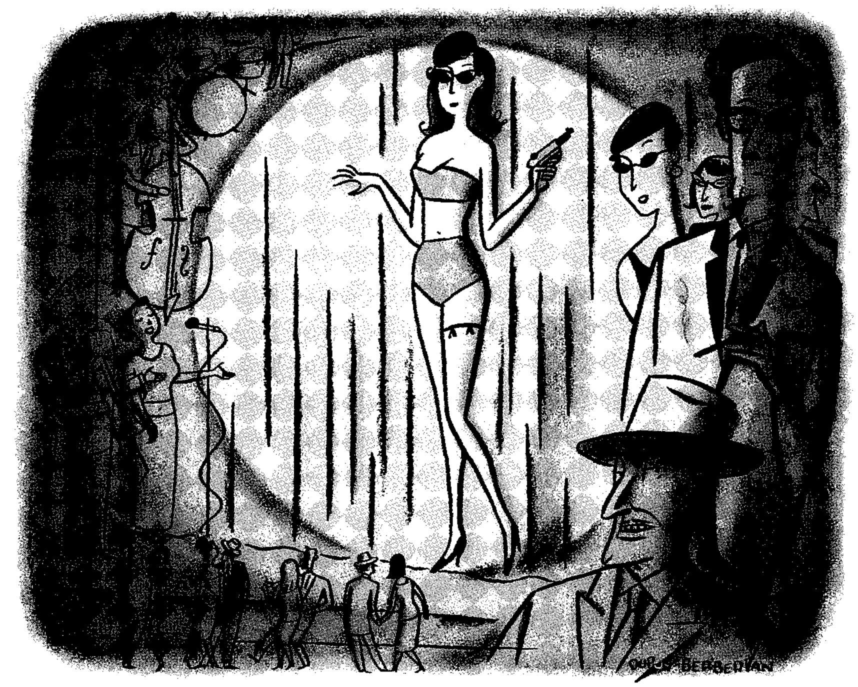
Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—April 5-6: Louisiana-born guitarist **LONNIE BROOKS.**

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, punks, poseurs, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. Live music nightly.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel vault deep in the heart of the meat district.

Don Hill's, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. Friday night is SqueezeBox, a vinyl-and-velvet gay glamfest, hosted by Misstress Formika.

El Flamingo, 547 W. 21st St. (243-2121)—Thursday nights at this resurrected thirties-era club are devoted to Cinéma, a variety show-cum-party featuring the Flying Neutrinos' New Orleans-style music and nouveau burlesque by Billy Madley, a woman who specializes in narrative strip numbers that move from party scenes à la "La Dolce Vita" to spy-thriller shoot-outs and always stop at pasties. Cinéma attracts latter-day zoot-suit types and off-duty cigarette girls; the clientele, the stage show, the cocktails, the lacquer-and-chrome décor, and the voluptuous vinyl booths all add to the illusion of time travel.



The Flying Neutrinos, Billy Madley, and assorted swingers and cigarette girls at Cinéma, every Thursday night at El Flamingo.

DUPUY-BERBERIAN

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. April 5: **GOV'T MULE,** featuring members of the Allman Brothers. April 6: **MOE.** April 7: **JAWBREAKER.** . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday. The dancers share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest belowstairs room that looks like a spruced-up tenement apartment. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. April 3: Guitarist **HIRAM BULLOCK,** formerly of David Letterman's band.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Boston hunk oddity **JONATHAN RICHMAN** will preach to the converted April 4-6. Richman's songs, his stories, and his bare chest—should he deign to dispense with his shirt—are proud and fascinating assets, and no other rocker around can reap such enchantment from the mundane.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—April 4: The crepuscular rock of **CONGO NORVELL.** April 6: **POSSUM DIXON.** Borrowing elements from the Cars and the Cramps, this Los Angeles foursome makes dramatic, enticing, and angular pop. Its second record, "Star Maps," has a dark, neurotic touch that keeps you on the edge of you chair. April 8: The **CUCUMBERS** play delicately sweet pop; the majority of their songs eschew fat, distorted guitar notes in favor of twangy country-flavored elements, like banjo, mandolin, and forlorn vocals.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and the occasional cha-cha. Dining.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, smoke blows through the nostrils of a buffalo head, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—April 6: **CLARENCE (GATEMOUTH) BROWN.** He's past seventy, but you'd never know it from his sinewy sound. Like virtually every other Texas blues guitarist of the last half-century, he owes much to T-Bone Walker, but unlike his fellow disciples he's always sought to expand the vocabulary of the blues, mixing in elements of country, Cajun, and jazz. And, when he picks up that electric fiddle, watch out.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—April 3: Michael Ray and the Kosmic Krew. April 6: Too Skinnee J's.

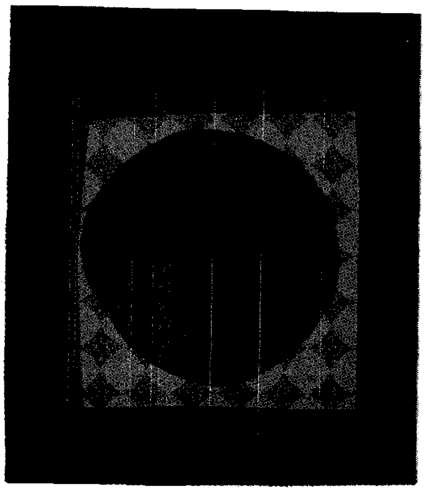
ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Splendors of Imperial China." The most magnificent exhibition of the season—a superbly mounted selection of more than four hundred objects from the National Palace Museum, in Taipei—amounts to a fairly complete synopsis of Chinese art in all mediums. The objects range from Neolithic jade disks to decadent, Western-influenced paintings from the reign (1736-95) of the Ch'ien-lung emperor, whose personal collection forms the basis of the Palace Museum's holdings. The level of connoisseurship is unsurpassed. A porcelain bowl, vase, and dish from the Sung dynasty, all three in robin's-egg blue, approach perfection. The zestful immediacy of a scroll by the Zen calligrapher Huai-su, done in a style known to scholars as "wild cursive," may owe something to his habit of getting drunk as he worked. Most impressive of all are the nearly life-size imperial portraits, which are rendered with a razor-sharp clarity. The one of T'ai-tsu, the founder of the Sung dynasty—a mountainous man in a white robe and a little black cap—proclaims majesty and an unwavering belief that China will endure forever. Who would argue? Through May 19. . . . ¶ "Bare Witness: Clothing and Nudity," a history of concealment and exposure in fashion since the eighteenth century, is on view in the Costume Institute. . . . ¶ "Fabergé in America." Fifteen of the forty-four extant imperial Easter eggs are on view in this exhibit of works from American collections, along with more than four hundred baskets, vases, table clocks, cigarette boxes, and other delights. Through April 28. . . . ¶ "Enamels of Limoges," a slew of precious objects dating from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries—medallions, reliquaries, portable altars, and such—from the French town's abbey workshops. Through June 16. . . . ¶ Lesser-known and experimental color prints by artists employed by the W.P.A. Through May 26. . . . ¶ "Picturing Paradise: Colonial Photography of Samoa, 1875-1925." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Brancusi," a tantalizing mini-retrospective of twenty-four sculptures that represent the master at his best: the wood-and-limestone "Exotic Plant," at once primitive and unspeakably sophisticated; two big, comical oak cups; a set of four tilted heads, in bronze, plaster, and wood, so dreamy that you almost drift away; and the sublime gray marble "Fish." Through April 23. . . . ¶ A large retrospective of black-and-white photographs from the late forties to the present by Roy DeCarava. Among the subjects are jazz musicians, street and subway life, and urban civil-rights protests. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Deformations: Aspects of the Modern Grotesque" features works in many mediums by such artists as Francis Bacon, Cindy Sherman, James Ensor, Philip Guston, and Eva Hesse. Through May 21. . . . ¶ Drawings, an architectural model, and documentary photographs provide an overview of the German designer Lilly Reich's work, which included several installations for clothing, housing, and building-materials expositions in the twenties and thirties. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Sol LeWitt Prints, 1970-1995." Through May 7. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline." This exhibition is chockablock with masterpieces—from early Kandinskys and Maleviches to the mute totems of minimalism which have dominated abstract art since the sixties—but some of the elisions are galling. Where are Hans Hofmann, Kenneth Noland, Morris Louis? Why so few women? Why *nine* Rymans but not even one Marden? And why no artists who came to the fore after the seventies? In short, a beautiful failure. Through May 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)



"Form-Light-Glass," at the American Craft Museum.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of a hundred assemblages, constructed from scavenged street and flea-market materials, by Edward Kienholz (1927-94) and Nancy Reddin Kienholz. Through June 2. . . . ¶ "Willem de Kooning's Door Cycle." A display of four paintings from the mid-sixties on long, narrow doors, supplemented by several related works and by Hans Namuth's photographs of de Kooning. Through May 26. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Large-format black-and-white and color photographs documenting a hundred endangered North American plants and animals. . . . ¶ "Amber: Window to the Past." Since the Mesolithic Period (9000-6000 B.C.), human beings have carved objects out of fossilized tree resin. But all sorts of things—butterflies, geckos, tree frogs—were getting stuck in amber at a considerably earlier date; the oldest known victims (on view here) are entrapped in ninety-four-million-year-old amber from New Jersey. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A large number of paintings, sculptures, costumes, and religious objects from the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru are on view in "Converging Cultures: Art & Identity in Spanish America." Through July 14. . . . ¶ Seventy paintings by the American Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851-1938), whose atmospheric landscapes and genre scenes of ladies in drawing rooms exhibit a distinctive treatment of space. Through June 9. . . . ¶ "Alone in a Crowd: Prints by African-American Artists from the 1930s-1940s." Through April 21. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Form-Light-Glass: Contemporary Glass from the Czech Republic" features seven large sculptures by glass artists Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, Václav Cigler, Marian Karel, Vladimír Kopecký, and Dana Zámečníková. Through June 9. . . . ¶ A display of kaleidoscopic glass mosaics from the past twenty years by Klaus Moje. Through June 9. . . . ¶ "The Art of Peter Voulkos." Sculptures from the late fifties to the present by the influential ceramist. Through June 9. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Marc Chagall, 1907-1917." A selection of oils, gouaches, and drawings from the painter's early years in Vitebsk, St. Petersburg, and Paris. . . . ¶ Obsessive, confrontational, and humorous attitudes in contemporary art are the focus of a show called "Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities." Among the artists involved are Deborah Kass, Neil Goldberg, Elaine Reichek, Art Spiegelman, and Hannah Wilke. Through July 14. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Rainbows and Shimmering Bridges" offers contemporary lacquerware by traditional artisans, lacquer masters, design mavens, and avant-gardistes. Through April 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Discovering Ellis Ruley." Sixty works by the African-American coal miner and construction laborer (1882-1959) who for the last twenty years of his life painted portraits of pop-culture celebrities, exotic landscapes, and idyllic farmscapes. Through April 28. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Gaelic Gotham: A History of the Irish in New York" features more than four hundred paintings, prints, photographs, costumes, and other objects, from the museum's collection and on loan from many other institutions. . . . ¶ "The Talk of the Town: Rea Irvin of *The New Yorker.*" Eighty-three covers and drawings, most of them from the artist's personal collection, which he donated to the museum in 1967. Through May 5. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W.—"Murders That Changed New York," an investigation—through newspapers, broadsides, books, and prints—into six homicides that shocked even Gothamites, from the murder of prostitute Ellen Jewett, in 1836, to the killing of Kitty Genovese, in 1964. Through April 7. . . . ¶ "New York Then and Now: The Upper West Side," an exhibit of archival survey photographs from 1880 to 1930, alongside views of the same locations today. Through May 19. . . . ¶ Jugs, jars, bottles, crocks, churns, bowls, inkwells, and flowerpots turn up in "New York Stoneware." Through April 7. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Vija Celmins—Paintings and drawings of night skies which have a lustrous profundity that might without exaggeration be called cosmic. The intense drawings, which trace the paths of falling stars, are created from dense, lush layers of charcoal, in rich blacks that fade to deep grays, with flecks of starlight pricking through. The paintings are harder-edged and, consequently, less poetic. Through April 5. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Robert Graham—Three new bronze female nudes, along with dozens of prints of the same models. Through April 20. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Jane Kaplowitz—A series of paintings in a Warholian mode, with captions and inventory numbers, based on Visconti's 1971 film, "Death in Venice." Through April 13. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Marina Karella—Smallish, blurry, exceedingly pretty canvases evocative of both Ross Bleckner's and Gerhard Richter's work. How's that for cunning pastiche? The paintings feature moody interiors, sometimes with a suggestion of a human presence, pointing toward high-concept contemporary notions while remaining emotionally quite accessible. Through April 18. (McGrath, 20 W. 57th St.)

Jacques Lipchitz (1891-1973) / **"Cubist Prints"**—A chronological survey of sculptures from 1911 to 1939. The earliest of them suggest a sinuous (and frankly rather silly) Art Nouveau aesthetic; the mature ones are in-

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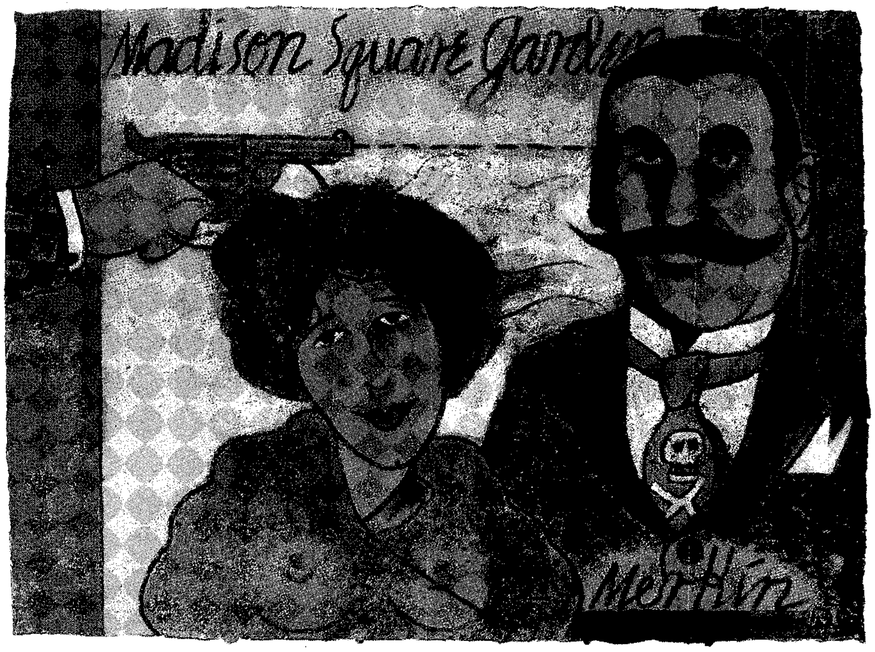
debted to Cubism and also display affinities with Giacometti, Ernst, and even the Russian Constructivists. Lipchitz was an extremely capable synthesizer of the School of Paris's stylistic trends, and his best work is quite beautiful. The show also includes, as a proper survey should, some of his less successful ventures—e.g., modernist sculptures on mythological themes which are hilarious in their kitschiness. / Prints, drawings, and illustrated books from 1909 to 1928, by Braque, Picasso, Gris, Léger, Villon, and others. Both shows through April 13. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"The Museum of Non-Objective Painting—American Abstract Art"—Paintings from the thirties and forties by artists who were shown at the Guggenheim's precursor, including Hilla Rebay, Rudolf Bauer, Irene Rice Pereira, Rolph Scarlett, and Jean Xceron. Through April 27. (Snyder, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**Joe Andoe,** Wächter, 111 E. 65th St. Through April 17. . . . **Arman,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Through April 27. . . . **Milton Avery,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 27. . . . **Georg Baselitz,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays; through April 27. . . . **Alan Berliner,** Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. Through April 16. . . . **Katherine Bowling,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. Through May 4. . . . **Sue Coe,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. Through May 24. . . . **Jim Dine,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. Through April 27. . . . **Leon Goldin,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through April 20. . . . **Eva Hesse** and **Roberto Juarez,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 6. . . . **Bill Jensen,** Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. Through April 13. . . . **Wolf Kahn,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through April 20. . . . **Richard Serra,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. Through April 13. . . . **Joan Snyder,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. Through May 11. . . . **Krzysztof Wodiczko,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. Through April 27.



Harry K. Thaw mortally wounding Stanford White, a crime examined in "Murders That Changed New York," at the New-York Historical Society.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Chiara Dynys—Sculptures executed in marble, gold leaf, and wax. Severely tasteful exercises in geometry, they can't seem to make up their mind whether they're elegant minimalism or minimal decoration. Through April 13. (Cristinerose, 395 West Broadway.)

Gary Simmons—Three huge wall drawings on chalkboard, and several smaller, related works on paper. The artist handles the difficulty inherent in working on this scale with impressive élan, continuing to exploit his signature style—smudged or erased chalk—while retreating from the didacticism of his earlier work, most of which drew on racial stereotypes. The imagery (a roller coaster, a gazebo, a cartoonishly rendered explosion) seems utterly familiar, yet somehow imbued with an obscure personal significance. Through April 13. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Robert Therrien / Chryssa—An amusing, agreeably perplexing fantasy: a thirty-five-foot-long bed spirals above the gallery floor in an impossible loop-de-loop, like a surrealistic flourish out of a Bugs Bunny cartoon. / Elegant scrolls of aluminum and neon from a pioneer light sculptor. Both shows through April 13. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Kara Walker—"From the Bowels to the Bosom: A Reconstruction," an installation of drawings and wall-mounted silhouettes in which the artist uses the conventional historical cyclorama to reëxamine the repressed history of blacks in the Old South. Walker's wickedly funny, defiantly two-dimensional (both spatially and figuratively) images—blacks and whites enduring or indulging in various forms of rape, mutilation, and murder—display a sensibility bracingly free of both right- and left-wing cant. Through April 13. (Wooster Gardens, 558 Broadway.)

Nari Ward—"Happy Smilers," a complex enclosure made of various kinds of refuse—old mattresses, air conditioners, refrigerators—bound together with fire hoses. Sand and salt blanket the floor, a fire escape looms overhead, and traditional Jamaican music is piped in. A fantasia of dislocation, the installation conjures a junkyard dreamscape pitched between the memory of a lost island culture and the contemporary reality of Harlem streets. Through April 6. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

"Can You Digit?"—A millennial video arcade for the mind (and it doesn't require quarters), this glimpse into interactivity is so engaging that it almost makes you look forward to the nerdy future. Predictably, there's a lot of political posturing (out-of-focus photographs of the conflict in Bosnia, whatever the artist's intent, simply look blurry), but there's also a great deal of ingenuity and fun. "Martyr," a hilarious game by Don Farnsworth and John Nava, invites the player to deflect arrows aimed at the torso of Mantegna's St. Sebastian. Lev Manovich offers an intriguing loop of century-old footage—a muscleman flexing with a pole—and slowly shrinks it down to a single pixel. Ken Feingold satirizes the medium with an image of a Howdy Doody-like puppet's head, its jaw flapping, caught in a nightmarish maelstrom of icons whirling by so fast that it's almost impossible to double-click on them—but if you do, you can shut up the puppet. Some of the work is frankly commercial, such as Post Tool Design's Post/TV, an ingeniously designed interactive magazine that allows you to roam from Jimi Hendrix to Peter, Paul & Mary. Through April 13. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

Group Show—For years, Mary Boone has served as an emblem for the wretchedly excessive art world of the eighties. Now, as a parting gesture to SoHo, she mounts a rare group show before moving to quieter 57th Street environs. Some have suggested that her aim is to move downtown uptown. We'll see. For the moment, Leonardo Drew and Mark Francis offer nothing out of the ordinary for this perennially tasteful gallery: the former makes large, cumbersome wall reliefs composed of tritely "povera" materials (rusty metal, dirty fabric, string), with a blandly Kounellis-like vibe; the latter paints wan abstractions that bear more than a passing resemblance to canvases by Ross Bleckner, a Boone staple. The only surprise here is Oliver Herring, whose eerie work is inconspicuously installed in the rear gallery: strange and beautiful sculptures of coats, in clear or reflective Mylar. Through April 27. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Short List—**Ghada Amer,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through April 11. . . . **Caio Fonseca,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway. Through April 27. . . . **Gregory Green,** Protetch, 560 Broadway. Through April 27. . . . **Kcho,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. Through April 20. . . . **Peggy Kronengold,** First Street Gallery, 560 Broadway. Through April 13. . . . **Jonathan Lasker,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. Through April 27. . . . **Larry Mantello,** Wittels, 580 Broadway. Through April 20. . . . **Shari Mendelson** and **Nancy Diamond,** Black + Herron, 79 Grand St. Through April 6. . . . **Beatriz Milhazes,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. Through April 13. . . . **Mia Westerlund Roosen,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. Through April 27. . . . **Erika Rothenberg,** P.F.O.W, 532 Broadway. Through April 20. . . . **Julião Sarmento,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. Through April 20. . . . **Peter Schuyff,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. Through April 20. . . . **Amy Sillman,** Kaplan, 580 Broadway. Through April 20. . . . **Meyer Vaisman,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. Through April 20. . . . **Meg Webster,** Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through April 26. . . . **Robert Wilson,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Through April 27.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ferenc Berko—Pictures from the thirties and forties, including light-handed photojournalistic images made in European capitals and in India, innovative nudes, semi-abstract views of Chicago, and pioneering color work from 1947 to 1949. Through May 4. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

Harry Callahan—The modern legend's clarity and consistency are well represented in this exhibit of lesser-known photographs and a handful of masterpieces. Three sharp color prints of listing Chicago storefronts (1954) are surprisingly Hopperesque. The famous portraits of the artist's wife and daughter

RICHARD MERKIN

and of his friend Bob Fine could carry a show on their own. What this gathering does best is whet the appetite for the big Callahan retrospective at the National Gallery, in Washington, D.C. (through May 19). Reserve your Amtrak seats now; it's not coming north. Through April 6. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Leonard Freed—"Collected Poems," a retrospective of this Magnum photographer's career. Through April 24. (Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

William Klein—An exhibit of previously unpublished pictures from "New York 1954.55," a reëdited and redesigned version of the photographer's 1956 book, "Life Is Good and Good for You in New York." Through May 11. (Greenberg and Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

Arthur Tress—Pictures from three series, made between 1968 and 1972: "Open Space in the Inner City," "Dream Collector," and "Theatre of the Mind." Through May 11. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

David Vestal—Quiet, watery day and night views of New York City from the forties through the sixties. Vestal—who is also a teacher, an editor, and a prolific writer—developed a fine intuition for photographing conditions that dramatically change the urban tenor. Picturesque snowfalls, a white-out blizzard, a battering rainstorm—all are captured with unaffected fluency. An atypical image anthropomorphizes a dozen or so Chelsea water towers, which have congregated on the rooftops to admire the hazy sunset. Through April 27. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Josef Sudek: The Pigment Prints, 1947-1954." Still-lifes of eggs and bread, glasses of water and beer, nudes, Prague castles and gardens, all of them contact prints made with charcoal, carbon, and carbro processes. Starts April 5. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Horst: A Retrospective." Elegant, meticulous fashion photography is his hallmark, but this comprehensive survey also includes portraits (Dietrich, Cocteau, Chanel), society interiors, abstract studies, and nudes. Through June 2. . . . ¶ "Intimate Nature: Ansel Adams and the Close View." Closeups that complement the artist's panoramic visions. Through June 2. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

"USSR in Construction, 1930-1940"—Vintage photographs and photomontages published in that Soviet propaganda journal, by Max Alpert, Arkady Shaikhet, Georgi Zelma, Boris Ignatovich, and others. Through April 27. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

Short List—**RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER,** Saul, 560 Broadway. Through April 27. . . . **PAUL CAPONIGRO,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 27. . . . **JED DEVINE,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through April 13. . . . **CONNIE IMBODEN** and **VICTOR FRIEDMAN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through April 13. . . . **RAY K. METZKER** and **THOMAS BARROW,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through April 13. . . . **SHEILA METZNER** and **JUDITH JOY ROSS,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. Through April 6. . . . **MARK MORRISROE,** Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through April 28. . . . **RICHARD POUSETTE-DART,** Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 13. . . . **BASTIENNE SCHMIDT,** Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. Through May 18. . . . **STEFAN THEMERSON,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. Through April 27. . . . **LISA YOUNG,** Wessel O'Connor, 60 Thomas St., between Church St. and West Broadway. Opens at noon; through April 27.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and the New-York Historical Society.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**SALOME,** with Catherine Malfitano, Barbara Dever, Jacque Trussel, and Bernd Weikl; conducted by Donald Runnicles. (April 3 at 8:30.) . . . **ROMÉO ET JULIETTE,** by Gounod, with Ruth Ann Swenson and Richard Leech; Edoardo Müller. (April 4 and April 8 at 8.) . . . **LA FORZA DEL DESTINO,** with Deborah Voigt, Gloria Scalchi, Sergej Larin, and Vladimir Chernov; James Levine. (April 5 at 8.) . . . **THE VOYAGE,** by Philip Glass. (April 6 at 1:30.) . . . **ANDREA CHÉNIER,** by Umberto Giordano, in the opening performances of a new production, with Aprile Millo, Luciano Pavarotti, and Juan Pons; Mr. Levine. (April 6 at 8 and April 9 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—**ATTILA,** by Verdi. (April 4 at 8.) . . . **THE DREYFUS AFFAIR,** by Jost Meier, with a libretto by George Whyte. (April 5 at 8.) . . . **DER ROSENKAVALIER.** (April 6 at 1:30.) . . . **THE MAGIC FLUTE,** performed in English. (April 6 at 8.) . . . **THE MERRY WIDOW,** in English. (April 7 at 1:30.) . . . **RIGOLETTO.** (April 9 at 6:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

St. Bartholomew's Choir—Performing Mozart's Requiem, as well as the composer's late motet "Ave Verum Corpus" and his early "Grabmusik" (K. 42). The latter belongs to a long-lost South German and Austrian tradition of Good Friday performances of Passion oratorios staged (with scenery and acting) before the holy sepulchres of cathedrals. Mozart's contribution came about in response to a sort of dare from the Archbishop of Salzburg, who refused to believe that the pieces he had been hearing recently were written by an eleven-year-old. He therefore sequestered the young composer for a week all alone in a room with a sheaf of music paper and a libretto in which a human soul carries on a conversation with an angel. Mozart walked out at the end of the week carrying his "Grabmusik," and the Archbishop became a believer. In this performance, the choir is accompanied by the Fairfield Orchestra, a period-instrument ensemble. William Trafka directs. (Park Ave. at 50th St. 378-0248. April 3 at 8.)

Grace Church Choral Society—Bruce G. McInnis directs the chorus, the Grace Church Boy Choir, a chamber orchestra, and soloists in three works appropriate to Holy Week: Liszt's "Via Crucis," Reger's "Trauerode," and Fauré's Requiem. (Broadway at E. 10th St. 533-4653. April 5 at 7:30.)

Saint James' Church Chancel Choir—The chorus, with an orchestra, offers a German Baroque Passion cantata, "Ach Herr, mich armen Sünder," thought by some scholars to be a youthful work by Handel. Motets by Byrd, Victoria, Palestrina, and Allegri (his celebrated "Miserere") complete the program. (Saint James' Church, 865 Madison Ave., at 71st St. April 5 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

New York Choral Society—John Daly Goodwin directs Kodály's "Psalmus Hungaricus" and the première of Paul Alan Levi's "Dayenu: a Passover Oratorio." Levi's work is structured in two broad sections: the first recounts the story of the flight of the Jews from Egypt, and the second finds a modern parallel in the Holocaust and the eventual liberation of concentration-camp prisoners in May, 1945. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. April 6 at 8.)

Sundays on the Island—Flutist Immanuel Davis and harpist Park Stickney perform music by Bach, Debussy, Fauré, and others. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. April 7 at noon.)

Gregorian Chant Choir of Spain—This is not the Benedictine schola of Santo Domingo de

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Silos, the group that was catapulted to international renown two years ago by Angel/EMI's "Chant" release (a repackaging of recordings that had been made in the nineteen-seventies). But this ensemble of thirty singers does have the same director, Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, who left the order in 1973 to pursue a secular career and now serves as president of the Spanish Musicological Society. In this performance, the ensemble will offer a variety of monophonic pieces from the Gregorian repertoire. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. April 9 at 8.)

RECITALS

Bargemusic—Violinist Christiaan Bor, violist Toby Hoffman, and cellist Nathaniel Rosen perform Beethoven's three String Trios (Op. 9). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. April 4 at 7:30 and April 7 at 4.)

Christensen-Fredriksen Duo—David Christensen plays Crumb's 1955 Sonata for Solo Cello, pianist Brent Fredriksen offers Nielsen's Chaconne, and the two join for sonatas by Schubert (the "Arpeggione"), Brahms (in E Minor), and the Norwegian composer Bjørn Breimo. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. April 4 at 8.)

Music Under Construction—Premières of works for string quartet by Nathaniel Drake, Patrick Grant, Wendy Griffiths, Pierre Ruiz, and Faye-Ellen Silverman, as well as quartets by Thomas Addison and Deborah Drattell and the first performance of a string trio by Chris Woltmann. (Construction Company Space, 10 E. 8th St. 924-7882. April 6 at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—The ensemble is featured in the New School's annual presentation of Haydn's "Seven Last Words of Christ," in its version for string quartet. (66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. April 7 at 3.)

"Sonidos de las Americas"—This year, the annual Latin American-music festival focusses on Brazil. April 7 at 4: The Duo Assad performs guitar duets by Marlos Nobre, Egberto Gismonti, Villa-Lobos, Hermeto Pascoal, and Sérgio Assad. (Thalia Spanish Theatre, 41-17 Greenpoint Ave., Sunnyside, Queens. 1-718 729-3880.) . . . ¶ April 8 at 8: The Duo Diálogos (a percussion team) is assisted by several colleagues. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800.) . . . ¶ April 9 at 8: The Duo Assad and the Duo Diálogos collaborate in a program that includes works by Villa-Lobos and Radamés Gnattali. (Weill Recital Hall.) . . . **note:** The series continues through April 14.

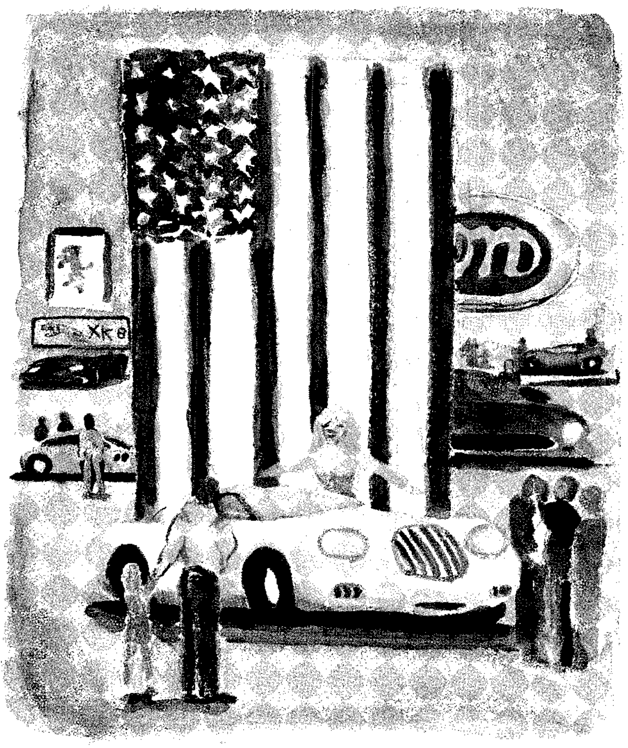
Salon Soirées—Piano quartets by Schumann and Ilan Rechtman, performed in an intimate music room by violinist Laura Frautschi, violist Ori Kam, cellist Benjamin Moore, and Mr. Rechtman (at the piano). (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. April 7 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Carlo Bergonzi—Although this tenor seems to have been singing as long as anyone can remember, he's scarcely an antique; he'll turn seventy-two this July. Bergonzi began his operatic career in 1948, as a baritone: Rossini's Figaro was his début role. But he quickly found his niche as a lyric-spinto tenor, and it's in that higher tessitura (and in the plum roles to which such voices lay claim) that he made his mark in the annals of Italian opera. A wise listener knows to approach the recitals of singers who have reached the autumn of their careers with caution. Fortunately, Bergonzi also approaches his recitals with caution—eschewing arias as out of reach and offering what he *can* sing rather than what he wishes he still could. In recent years he has continued to display the vocal balance and tasteful restraint that have always defined his style. In this performance, sponsored by Opera Orchestra of New York, he'll offer two dozen Italian songs by Francesco Paolo Tosti and many others. Pianist Vincenzo Scalera assists. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. April 8 at 8.)

Speculum Musicae—The contemporary-music group presents Jacob Druckman's Duo for Violin and Cello, Thomas Adès's "Arcadiana," Davidovsky's "Festino," and Hindemith's String Quartet No. 3. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. April 8 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

Piano Duo Schnabel—Joan Rowland and Karl-Ulrich Schnabel (son of the famous pianist, and a notable musician in his own right) perform works for piano four-hands by Schubert (his "Grand Duo"), Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, and Bizet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. April 8 at 8.)

Mannes Contemporary Music Festival—The conservatory's exploration of the new turns the spotlight on scores written in the eighties and nineties, by Sofia Gubaidulina, Kaija Saariaho, Dave Heath, John Tavener, and Salvatore Sciarrino. Madeleine Shapiro directs the New Music Mannes ensemble. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. April 8 at 8. No tickets necessary.)



The New York Auto Show, at the Javits Center.

STEPHEN LACK

Consortium Concerts—Members and friends of the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society present music by Eric Moe, David Rakowski, Charles Wuorinen, Earl Kim, Jay Alan Yim, and Wayne Peterson. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. April 9 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Inventing the Truth—When Michael Ondaatje talks about writers, he says "poets": "I love readings. You can somehow trust the poet." Ondaatje, who reads this Monday, has written four novels, a memoir, and three books of poetry, and he handles all of these forms with a confessional intimacy that could be called unfailingly true to life, were it not for the fact that so much of the material—an outlaw shooting a cat through the floorboards, a trumpeter on the cusp of the jazz era languishing in an East Louisiana madhouse, a burned and blinded aviator identifying weapons for nomads in the desert—is clearly remote from his own experience. "You start inventing things that sometimes turn out to be true," he says. "Imagining how someone could make a seven-day trek across the desert with just an onion. So after a while you're not quite sure what is fiction and what isn't fact." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. April 8 at 8.)

"Oh My Car Men"—"And the stars, and the cars," Humbert Humbert sings with his Lolita, "and the bars, and the barmen." The New York Auto Show revs it up, with Spyders and Vipers and Escorts, oh my! (Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. 307-7171. April 6-14.)

Because We Need the Eggs—April 4 at noon: Fearlessly, Whiskers the Bunny, seven foot two from hind feet to rabbit ears, hops among the hunters at the Queens County Farm Museum's Easter-egg hunt. (73-50 Little Neck Parkway, Floral Park, Queens. 1-718 347-3726.) . . . ¶ April 6 at 3:30: The Rockettes are still kicking—in raincoats, in bellhop getups, in Bob Mackie—in the annual Radio City Spring Spectacular. Their supporting cast this year includes fifty glowing virtual rabbits performing their own bunny kicks under black light. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Performances continue through April 21.) . . . ¶ April 7, from 10 to 5: Participants in the Easter Parade can show off the frills and bonnets of their holiday finery. Fifth Avenue will be closed to traffic from 45th Street to 57th Street, and you can start gawking at either end. . . . ¶ April 7 at noon: Big Onion Walking Tours cruises over to Ellis Island for its annual Easter Sunday visit highlighting the Jewish immigrant experience. For more information, call 439-1090.

Readings—April 4 at 7: Poet Nina Kossman reads her translations of poems by Marina Tsvetayeva. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. 431-7920.) . . . ¶ April 4 at 10 P.M.: Lucie Brock-Broido leads a pride of poets in an all-night reading of Dante's Inferno. Devil dogs, red hots, and devil's food cake will be served. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. For more information, call 316-7540.) . . . ¶ April 7 at 3: Amy Hempel and Sheila Kohler read from their epistolary novels. (KGB, 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 9 at 8: Poet Richard Howard reads from his work. (Columbia University, Deutsches Haus, 420 W. 116th St. No tickets necessary.)

Seasons' Greetings—This year, New Yorkers can root-root-root for the home team—to finish second. Last year, the Yanks got hot in September and played such an exciting series against Seattle that it almost made you forget how bogus the new wild-card system is. But in the off-season, owner George Steinbrenner replaced his solid, stable, winning manager, Buck Showalter, with Joe Torre, whose major qualification so far seems to be his ability to follow orders. Steinbrenner then let his All-Star clutch-hitting catcher, Mike Stanley, leave to join home-run moguls Jose Canseco, Mo Vaughn, and Kevin Mitchell in the awesome Boston lineup. So look for the Yanks to come up short again in the final standings. As for the Mets—who have a strong, young team, with the projected starting rotation of Wilson, Isringhausen, Pulsipher, Mlicki, and Harnisch—they simply have the bad luck to be in the same division as the Atlanta Braves, the team of the nineties. (**yankees:** Vs. the Kansas City Royals, April 9 at 1. Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000. . . . ¶ **mets:** Vs. the St. Louis Cardinals, April 3-4 at 1:40. . . . Vs. the Pittsburgh Pirates, April 5 at 7:40 and April 6-7 at 1:40. Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

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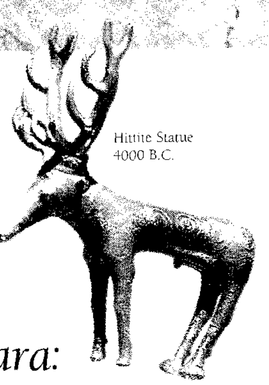
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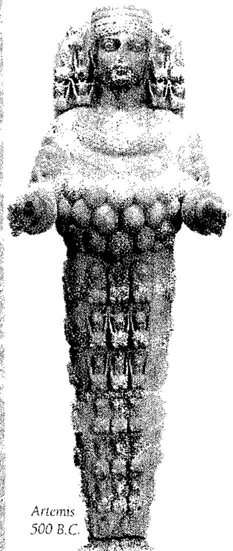
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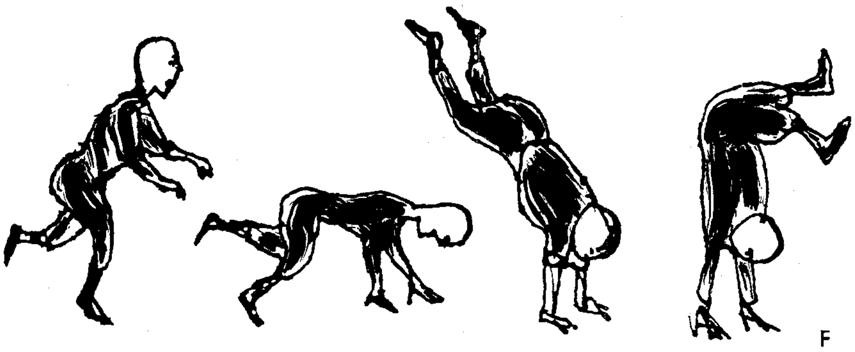

THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Cold Fever—A comedy directed by Fridrik Thor Fridriksson, about the misadventures of a Japanese businessman (Masatoshi Nagase) in Iceland. With Lili Taylor and Fisher Stevens. Written by the director and Jim Stark. In English, Japanese, and Icelandic. Opening April 5. (Angelika Film Center.)

Faithful—Chazz Palminteri plays a hit man, in his screen adaptation of his 1991 stage comedy about a husband (Ryan O'Neal) who puts out a contract on his wife (Cher). Paul Mazursky is the director. Opening April 3. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

The Last Supper—Five left-leaning graduate students (Cameron Diaz, Annabeth Gish, Ron Eldard, Jonathan Penner, and Courtney Vance) embark on a killing spree after they accidentally murder a right-wing dinner guest (Bill Paxton), in a black comedy directed by Stacy Title. Written by Dan Rosen. With Jason Alexander and Ron Perlman. Opening April 5. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity—An autobiographical docudrama by Rosa von Praunheim, in which the gay director fakes his own murder and then sends a television reporter (Desiree Nick) to investigate his past. Written by Valentin Passoni. In German. Opening April 5. (Cinema Village.)

Primal Fear—Richard Gere stars as a trial lawyer defending a Chicago altar boy (Edward Norton) accused of murder, in a thriller directed by Gregory Hoblit. With Laura Linney. Written by Steve Shagan and Ann Biderman, from William Diehl's 1993 novel. Opening April 3. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

A Thin Line Between Love and Hate—A comedy thriller directed by and starring Martin Lawrence, as a night-club promoter who seduces his dream girl (Lynn Whitfield). Written by the director and Bentley Kyle Evans, Kenny Buford, and Kim Bass. Opening April 3. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and James Wolcott. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 27.)

The Birdcage—Mike Nichols's remake of "La Cage aux Folles" (1978) largely contents itself with decking out what appears to be a profoundly, unalterably French farce in American drag; the cautious, sensible approach taken by Nichols and his screenwriter, Elaine May, has the drawback of making this movie feel a little, as the French might say, de trop. Although Robin Williams and Nathan Lane, as the bickering middle-aged lovers originally played by Ugo Tognazzi and Michel Serrault, are skillful, the script doesn't give them much opportunity to distinguish themselves from their memorable predecessors. Oddly, the funniest performer here is Gene Hackman, playing an aggressively straight, family-values-spouting politician. Also with Dianne Wiest.—T.R. (3/18/96) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Dead Man Walking—Tim Robbins's blunt, powerful movie tells the story of a murderer (Sean Penn) awaiting execution and a nun (Susan Sarandon) trying to save his soul—and, if possible, his skin. The filmmaker clearly hopes that familiarity with the grisly realities of capital punishment will finally breed contempt for the idea of premeditated, state-sponsored killing. And although the picture sometimes turns clunky and flat, as if it were sagging under the weight of its good intentions, it winds up being devastatingly effective. Penn has to reveal, within a reckless and apparently despicable character, a salvageable soul, and he makes the erratic rhythm of the condemned man's spiritual progress seem effortless and natural: he captures the languid, insinuating tempo of grace invading a locked-up spirit.—T.R. (1/8/96) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Olympia.)

Diabolique—A glossy remake of Henri-Georges Clouzot's famous 1954 thriller, in which a man's wife and his mistress join forces to do him in. Here, Isabelle Adjani is the wide-eyed wife, Chazz Palminteri the piggy husband, and Sharon Stone the cool, worldly mistress. The movie is obviously designed to be Stone's show, but her glamorous presence is too vivid for the dull, familiar surroundings. At first, she's an ironic femme fatale; by the end, she seems pure camp, like a bad girl in a John Waters movie. The director, Jeremiah Chechik, and the screenwriter, Don Roos, try desperately to add American spice to Clouzot's chilled French concoction; they throw in nudity, extra violence, Thelma-and-Louise feminism, and dog jokes, and wind up with something awful—vichyssoise sprinkled with jalapeños. Also featuring Kathy Bates, whose good-humored performance mildly enlivens the movie's second half.—T.R. (4/1/96) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, 72nd Street East, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, Lincoln Square, and Olympia.)

Executive Decision—This tight, suspenseful film almost redeems producer Joel Silver for his last misfire, "Fair Game." This time he's chosen a good storyteller as the director—Stuart Baird, who edited his "Die Hard" and "Lethal Weapon" films. Although the plot, about terrorists aboard a passenger plane, is formulaic, the pace is swift and the shoot-outs carefully choreographed. Kurt Russell and a snazzy group of second-stringers (Oliver Platt, John Leguizamo) carry off a whispery surveillance routine that would make the crew at "Mission: Impossible" proud. Dispensing with showy Stallone toughness for Harrison Ford-like charm under extreme stress, Russell brings heroic panache to the genre.—B.D. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

A Family Thing—This leisurely, unassuming drama about race relations was written by Billy Bob Thornton and Tom Epperson (who also collaborated on "One False Move") and directed by Richard Pearce ("The Long Walk Home"). An Arkansas tractor salesman (Robert Duvall) discovers that his real mother was a black woman, and sets off for Chicago to find his black half brother (James Earl Jones). The men don't hit it off right away, but they are destined, of course, to transcend their mutual suspicion; the movie, taking everything slow and easy, manages to make their eventual rapport credible. Duvall and Jones wear their roles like broken-in work clothes, and the screenplay has a drawling Southern rhythm that's very pleasing. The picture avoids being vulgar, manipulative, or inflammatory but sacrifices a good deal of dramatic energy in the process: at some point, you realize that your enjoyment isn't so much pleasure at what's on the screen as gratitude for what's not. Also with Irma P. Hall and Michael Beach. —T.R. (4/1/96) (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Regency, and Criterion Center.)

Fargo—Joel and Ethan Coen's coldest movie if not their coolest: it opens with a white-out that slowly resolves itself into a desolate Minnesota snowscape. Everybody talks with painful slowness, as if the icy air were freezing their chops; the resulting mood is lugubrious and oddly winning. The story, about a hopeless businessman (William H. Macy) who hires a couple of crooks (Peter Stormare and Steve Buscemi) to kidnap his wife, offers the usual Coen compound of random daftness and concentrated violence. Frances McDormand has a high old time as the police chief of the town of Brainerd; she enters the plot late and, decent and unhurried (her character is seven months pregnant), plods steadily toward a solution. A few scenes go around in circles, as if snow-blind, and the humor may be too inward and contorted for some tastes. But McDormand brings order to the weirdness and warms it up.—A.L. (3/25/96) (19th Street East 6, New York Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

Flirting with Disaster—An adopted scientist (Ben Stiller) hunts down his biological parents in a comedy written and directed by David O. Russell. With Patricia Arquette. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema II, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

The Flower of My Secret—Pedro Almodóvar's new picture feels rather sad and low-key—which is no bad thing, since his high-key work (notably "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" and "Kika") was becoming painful to watch. Leo (Marisa Paredes) is struggling through a wretched marriage and a split in her professional career: she longs to be taken seriously as a novelist but has been churning out schlock romances for years, with horrible success, under a pseudonym. The plot—straightforward, by Almodóvar's standards—involves Leo's efforts to strip the dead wood from her life and discover what's left alive, a process that includes flirting with a literary editor (the Chaucerian Juan Echanove) and making peace with her family. (Chus Lampreave and Rossy De Palma form a great pair as, respectively, Leo's mother and sister.) Almodóvar's script is, as usual, ripe to bursting, and even his sturdiest fans may be weary of flamenco sequences by now. But the movie itself is gracious, affecting, and frenzy-free. In Spanish.—A.L. (3/25/96) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Girl 6—Interesting, frustrating. In Spike Lee's latest, Theresa Randle plays an aspiring actress who takes up phone sex to pay the bills and ends up liking it. Lee must have been drawn to the playwright Suzan-Lori Parks's screenplay because it purports to explore images of African-American femininity; in fantasy sequences, Randle dresses up as the iconic actresses Dorothy Dandridge and Foxy Brown. But the movie lacks a clear point of view. While the mood shifts from morality play to straight-out porn to abstract pastiche reminiscent of the French New Wave, the heroine remains a cipher, and you're never sure whether to admire her, pity her, or condemn her. Lee appears as a neighbor (and as Mr. Jefferson, in a brief sendup of the TV series), and there are walk-ons by Debi Mazar, Naomi Campbell, and Madonna.—S.K. (19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Jack & Sarah—A banal English retread of the old single-guy-raising-a-baby setup. Richard E. Grant is a London yuppie whose wife dies in childbirth, leaving him a tiny daughter; Samantha Mathis is the American waitress who comes to work as his nanny. Grant overdoes both the slapstick and the pathos (in the early grieving scenes, he looks like a mad scientist). Mathis is harder to judge: her flat, earnest delivery could be a comment on English stereotypes of American girls, but it's more likely just bad acting. With Ian McKellen in the gratuitous role of a kindhearted homeless drunk. Written and directed by Tim Sullivan.—S.K. (First & 62nd Cinemas and 62nd & Broadway.)

Land and Freedom—One of the few English-language movies to tackle the Spanish Civil War since "For Whom the Bell Tolls." It tolls this time for David, a young Liverpudlian who travels to Spain in 1936 to join the Republican cause. For the director, Ken

AMNIO TO GENOME

Research on genetic diseases – notably many diseases of childhood – is entering an exciting, promising new phase. As scientists intensify the process of deciphering the secrets of the human genetic blueprint, their findings yield critical new clues to the development of genetic diseases and to the search for new therapies. ❧ The figures are staggering: deciphering the blueprint means the ultimate sequencing of 3,000,000,000 letters of the human genetic code. Genetic diseases number about 5,000. ❧ The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, takes pride in its commitment to both these research challenges. Years ago, discoveries in a Weizmann laboratory led to the first uses of amniocentesis to examine the fetus and diagnose hereditary illnesses. Among current projects on the Weizmann agenda are studies of fundamental embryonic development, Down syndrome, low birth weight, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, insulin substitutes and vaccinations against juvenile diabetes. The establishment of the Bioinformatics Genome Research Center on the Weizmann campus underscores the growing contributions of Institute scientists to the World Human Genome Project. ❧ It's another example of how support for basic scientific research yields practical benefits previously beyond reach.

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Loach, the Fascists barely exist: what matters to him is the comradeship, the daily comedy, and the flurries of panic which unite the volunteers. Ian Hart provides a fine, fiery turn as David, toughening up a dangerously virtuous role; the plot drags him back and forth between the ragged international militia at the front and the more organized Popular Army that gradually takes charge. Overall, the film is a muddle: the earnest political confrontations and the dire romance of David and a fellow-fighter (Rosana Pastor) have only a fraction of the dramatic force that Loach delivers with his battle scenes. But those scenes are tremendous—scruffy, fractious, and rousing. When the rifles jam or backfire, you can hear a whole heroic movement beginning to tear itself apart.—A.L. (3/25/96) (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Opening April 3, Richard Gere in "Primal Fear."

Leaving Las Vegas—In Mike Figgis's startlingly beautiful new movie, Nicolas Cage gives a great performance as a failed writer who is consciously drinking himself to death. Figgis tells the story as a series of vivid, intense moments; the sole trace of conventional drama is the hero's affair with a kind-hearted young hooker (superbly played by Elisabeth Shue). But the possibility that love will rescue him from his fate vanishes quickly, like a mirage. Although the movie is terribly, crushingly sad, its honesty is invigorating: it names its poison and downs it, neat.—T.R. (11/6/95) (Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Mighty Aphrodite—Woody Allen stars in his latest picture as Lenny, a New York sportswriter bored by his wife (Helena Bonham Carter) and attracted to a hooker (Mira Sorvino) who happens to be the mother—though she doesn't know it—of his adopted son. The movie treads enjoyably over old ground, though rather than cruising along with the ease of Allen's best work it tends to hobble, and it closes in a flurry of undecided endings. Sorvino's comic momentum rescues it. She offers the alarming prospect of sexual comedy without neurosis; you don't see *that* too often in a Woody Allen film.—A.L. (10/30/95) (68th St. Playhouse and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Postman—Antonio Skármeta's bittersweet 1985 novel, "Burning Patience," on which this movie is loosely based, told the story of Mario, a lonely postman who delivers mail to Pablo Neruda on Isla Negra, the corner of Chile where the poet spent much of his later life. In Michael Radford's lovely but sanitized version, the action has been moved to picturesque Italy. As Neruda, the great Philippe Noiret somehow conquers being dubbed in Spanish-accented Italian; as Mario, the late Italian comedian Massimo Troisi is painfully affecting. In Italian.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Sense and Sensibility—The director, Ang Lee, and the screenwriter, Emma Thompson, turn Jane Austen's first published novel into a gracious and unfailingly pleasant entertainment. Thompson also plays the very sensible heroine, Elinor Dashwood, and carries the movie without overwhelming her fellow-actors. (Alan Rickman and Kate Winslet are especially good; the only clinker is a grotesquely mannered performance by Hugh Grant as Elinor's suitor.) If the picture pressed its temperate charms on us any harder, they would be much easier to resist.—T.R. (12/18/95) (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Sgt. Bilko—Steve Martin plays the noncom that Phil Silvers made famous on television in the fifties, in Jonathan Lynn's updated comedy about army life. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

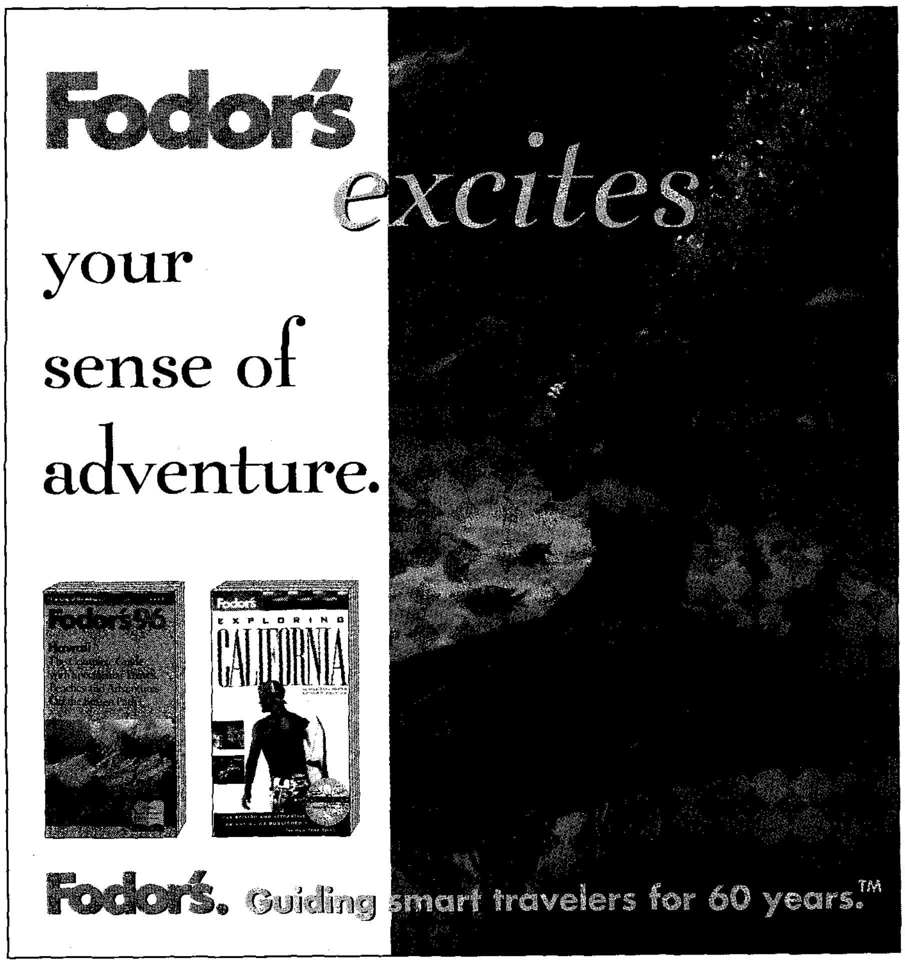
Sweet Nothing—Michael Imperioli plays a young Bronx office worker who starts selling crack in order to help support the wife and kids, only to wind up a lowdown, lying user. This intelligent study is based on a real addict's diary—a genesis that, while good for documentary details, sometimes makes the film feel more like an earnest transcription than an artistic endeavor. Still, it's tightly, lovingly done, and Imperioli and Mira Sorvino (as his wife) strike just the right balance of fragility and obliviousness. Directed by Gary Winick, from a script by Lee Drysdale.—S.K. (Film Forum; through April 9.)

Up Close & Personal—It's blonde on blond as Michelle Pfeiffer and Robert Redford, playing a rookie TV reporter and a veteran newshound, dazzle each other (but not us) in a buttery romance directed by Jon Avnet. As she rises in the news biz, he dips, which makes things touchy in the love department—or would, if this movie took the trouble to invade their privacy. A neutered replay of "A Star Is Born," written by Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne (who did the 1976 Barbra Streisand–Kris Kristofferson version), "Up Close & Personal" has no glamorous crackups or self-destructive lurches, though it does throw in a prison riot. Its lovers simply decouple and drift apart in zero gravity.—J.W. (3/11/96) (Sutton, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Embassy 4.)

ALSO PLAYING

ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN 2: Village East Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1. . . . **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT** (reviewed in our issue of 11/20/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **ANGELS & INSECTS** (1/29/96): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **ANNE FRANK REMEMBERED:** Quad Cinema. . . . **ANTONIA'S LINE:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **BABE** (9/4/95): Manhattan Twin. . . . **BEAUTIFUL GIRLS:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **BRAVEHEART** (6/5/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BROKEN ARROW** (2/19/96): Park & 86th Street Cinemas and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **CARRIED AWAY:** Village East Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Square. . . . **CASINO** (12/4/95): National Twin. . . . **THE CELLULOID CLOSET:** Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **CHUNGKING EXPRESS:** Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **CITY HALL** (2/19/96): 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **DENISE CALLS UP:** Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **DON'T BE A MENACE TO SOUTH CENTRAL WHILE DRINKING YOUR JUICE IN THE HOOD:** Embassy 2. . . . **FRISK:** Quad Cinema. . . . **FROM DUSK TO DAWN** (2/5/96): Em-

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS



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bassy 2. . . . **GET SHORTY** (10/23/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HATE (LA HAINE)**: Angelika 57. . . . **HEAT** (12/25/95-1/1/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HOMEWARD BOUND II: LOST IN SAN FRANCISCO**: 84th Street Sixplex. . . . **IF LUCY FELL**: Gemini. . . . **IT'S MY PARTY**: Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square. . . . **LAMERICA**: Film Forum. . . . **LAST SUMMER IN THE HAMPTONS**: Angelika 57. . . . **LITTLE INDIAN, BIG CITY**: Embassy 3. . . . **NIXON**: Embassy 3. . . . **OLIVER & COMPANY**: Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . **RACE THE SUN**: Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, Lincoln Square, and Embassy 1. . . . **RICHARD III** (1/22/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **RUMBLE IN THE BRONX**: Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE STAR MAKER**: Paris. . . . **WAITING TO EXHALE** (1/15/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE YOUNG POISONER'S HANDBOOK**: Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
SUTTON 1 AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
MANHATTAN TWIN, Third Ave. at 59th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
BARONET AND CORONET, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GEMINI 1 AND 2, Second Ave. at 64th St.
BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
WAVERLY 1 AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.
CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
ANGELIKA 57, 225 W. 57th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St.
CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EMBASSY 1, Broadway at 46th St.
EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
NATIONAL TWIN, Broadway at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

AMARCORD (1974)—To legions of admirers, this nostalgia trip is also a supreme poetic flight: Fellini uses the phantasmagoric visual skills he developed in middle age to recapture the wonder of his childhood in the provincial town of Rimini. The rest of us may feel that the Maestro turned his memories into the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, his friends and relatives into giant balloons. There's a blustering patriarch, a lumpy earth mother with a bellicose temperament, a grandfather who mouths old aphorisms and farts under pressure, an uncle who preens like a gigolo, another uncle who escapes from an insane asylum and shouts "I want a woman!" from the top of a tree, and two sons, the older blond and stalwart, the younger brunet and mischievous. At his best, Fellini conjures pathos and humor from his characters' inability to better themselves. But in much of this movie, he simply revels in their weaknesses with a lunatic joie de vivre. In Italian.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; April 8.)

BEN-HUR (1959)—Movie moguls have always had a real affinity for the grandiosity of the old Roman Empire. Charlton Heston plays the Jewish prince Ben-Hur; when he refuses to rat on the Jews opposed to Roman domination, his childhood friend Messala (Stephen Boyd) packs him off to the galleys and sends his mother (Martha Scott) and his sister (Cathy O'Donnell) to a dungeon. After prolonged slaving at the oars, Ben-Hur escapes and saves the life of a bigwig in the Roman navy (Jack Hawkins), who adopts him. Eventually we get to the chariot race, with Ben-Hur pitted against the treacherous Messala. Lew Wallace's hectic potboiler-classic has everything—even leprosy. M-G-M laid on the cash and William Wyler directed, with several busy assistants; the cast includes Sam Jaffe, Haya Harareet, Hugh Griffith, Finlay Currie, and a corps of stuntmen. Has anyone ever been able to detect the contributions to the script

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of Gore Vidal, Christopher Fry, and S. N. Behrman? Could *they*?—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 5-6.)

Das Boot (1980)—If you want to experience the tedium of life in a German submarine, this is the movie that will give it to you—you're trapped for two and a half hours in a Second World War U-boat that's ten feet wide by a hundred and fifty feet long. And with men who have the same kind of anti-war nobility that the men had in American submarine epics of the fifties. About ten minutes in, you may feel that you've already seen this picture. It even has the same kind of heroic man-of-few-words-but-strong-deep-feelings captain (Jurgen Prochnow). The camera keeps moving, yet the whole feeling is claustrophobic—the movement of the camera (deliberately) calls more attention to how cramped everything is. The director, Wolfgang Peterson, did the adaptation of the best-selling autobiographical novel by Lothar-Günther Buchheim, a former war correspondent. (Peterson had an international success with this film.) The set was constructed at the Bavaria Studios in Munich. In German.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; April 9.)

Goldfinger (1964)—A broadly entertaining crowd pleaser. In the third entry of the 007 series—a nutty blockbuster—every emerging piece of the James Bond formula teeters on the edge of camp, especially the sacrifical one-night stand (here she's suffocated in gold paint) and the sumptuous lair of the villain. Sean Connery's depiction of James Bond as a "complete sensualist" (in his words) "with a sense of humor" blossoms this time around. Gert Frobe is nerve-rackingly alert as the stubby title villain, who hopes to corner the Western world's gold supply by contaminating all the bullion in Fort Knox. Harold Sakata is indomitable as the Korean assassin Oddjob. And Honor Blackman's Pussy Galore, the butch ringmaster of a flying circus, makes a piquant foil to the hero. (Connery gets his biggest laugh with his loving pronunciation of her name: "Pooh-sea.") Guy Hamilton directed.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 8.)

Reflections in a Golden Eye (1967)—John Huston directed this sensuous and intense version of Carson McCullers' Georgia-set short novel of 1941; the visual style, which suggests paintings made from photographs, has a measured lyricism. The principal actors (Marlon Brando, Brian Keith, Elizabeth Taylor, Julie Harris) were able to do some startling things with their roles. The stifled homosexuality of Brando's duty-bound Major Penderton is grotesque and painful. This is one of Brando's most daring performances: the fat, ugly Major patting his hair nervously when he thinks he has a gentleman caller is so pitiful yet so ghastly that some members of the audience invariably cut themselves off from him by laughing. The movie is most garishly novelistic just when it departs most from McCullers. The story has been furbished with *additional* fetishes, as if McCullers' material weren't Southern and gothic enough. The first release prints were in a "desaturated" color process—they were golden-hued, with delicate sepia and pink tones; when the movie didn't do well at box offices, this stylized color was blamed, full-color prints were substituted, and the film lost its dreamy, mythic ambience.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; April 7.)

Saturday Night Fever (1977)—John Travolta plays Tony, a nineteen-year-old Italian Catholic who works selling paint in a hardware store in Brooklyn's Bay Ridge; on Saturday nights, he's off to the local disco dream palace, where he's the champion dancer. It's Tony's pent-up physicality—his needing to dance, his becoming himself only when he dances—that draws us into the pop rapture of this film. The mood, the beat, and the trance rhythm are so purely entertaining, and Travolta is such an original presence, that a viewer spins past the crudeness in the script. Young moviegoers saw themselves expressed in this film, as earlier generations had seen themselves in "The Wild One," "Rebel Without a Cause," "The Graduate," "Easy Rider"; Travolta became a national cult hero, almost overnight. John Badham directed. The music is by Barry, Robin, and Maurice Gibb, with additional music by David Shire.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; April 6.)

You Only Live Twice (1967)—The fifth of the Bonds, it's a product, but probably the most consistently entertaining of the Bond packages up to the time. Ken Adam's sci-fi production designs (including a hollow volcano) seem almost perfectly calculated for the genre. And Sean Connery's James Bond isn't the sleek, greasy-lipped dummy of the earlier films; playing the superhero as a paunchy, rather bemused spectator, Connery gives him more character than he's ever had before. The Roald Dahl screenplay (out of Jules Verne and old movies) is clever enough, and Donald Pleasence, as Blofeld, pets his white cat ominously. Lewis Gilbert directed; the cinematography is by Freddie Young.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 9.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

New Directors/New Films—A festival of international films. April 3 at 6: "Guiltrip" (Gerard Stembridge; Ireland).... April 3 at 9: "Madagascar" (Fernando Perez; Cuba) and "Here and There" (Sandra Kogut; Brazil and France).... April 4 at 6: "To Have (Or Not)" (Laetitia Masson; France).... April 4 at 9 and April 5 at 6: "Like Grains of Sand" (Ryosuke Hashiguchi; Japan).... April 5 at 9 and April 6 at 3:30: "Work" (Rachel Reichman; United States).... April 6 at 12:30 P.M. and April 7 at 3:30: "On the Beat" (Ning Ying; People's Republic of China).... April 6 at 6 and April 7 at 1: "The Arsonist" (U-Wei Bin Hajisaari; Malaysia).... April 6 at 9 and April 7 at 6:30: "I Shot Andy Warhol" (Mary Harron; United States). (Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 875-5610.)

ALAIN PILON

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through April 4: "The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser" (1975, Werner Herzog; in German), with Bruno S.... From April 5: "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (1964, Jacques Demy; in French), with Catherine Deneuve and Nino Castelnuovo.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—April 8 at 2:30: "Amarcord" (†).... April 8 at 6: "Death of a Bureaucrat" (1966, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea; a Cuban film, in Spanish).... April 9 at 2:30: "Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach" (1967, Jean-Marie Straub; in German), with Gustav Leonhardt and Christiane Lang.... April 9 at 3: "The Spirit of TV" (1990, Vincent Carelli; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), "Varela in Serra Pelada" (1988, Marcelo Tas and Fernando Meirelles; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), "The Spectator" (1989, Enrique Alvarez; a Cuban film, in Spanish), and "From Microchip to Chip" (1991, Pablo Lavin; a Chilean film, in Spanish).... April 9 at 6: "Das Boot" (†).... April 9 at 6: "The City" (1939, Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke) and "The Cummington Story" (1945, Helen Grayson and Larry Madison), both films with music by Aaron Copland.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Films by Olivier Assayas; all in French, with English subtitles. April 3-4 at 2 and 6:30: "Cold Water" (1994).... April 3 at 4 and 8:30: "Paris at Dawn" (1991).... April 4 at 4 and 8:30: "A New Life" (1993).... ¶ April 5 at 2 and 6:30 and April 6 at 4 and 8:15: "Ben-Hur" (†).... ¶ Sean Connery as James Bond. April 7 at 4 and 8:30: "Dr. No" (1962, Terence Young).... April 7 at 6:15: "From Russia with Love" (1963, Young).... April 8 at 2 and 6:30: "Goldfinger" (†).... April 8 at 4 and 8:30: "Thunderball" (1965, Young).... April 9 at 2 and 6:30: "You Only Live Twice" (†).... April 9 at 4:15 and 8:45: "Diamonds Are Forever" (1971, Guy Hamilton).... ¶ Weekend showings for children. April 6-7 at 2: "Babar, the Movie" (1989, Alan Bunce).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On April 7 at 7, the feature will be "The Lonely Lady" (1983, Peter Sasdy), with Pia Zadora.

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—April 9 at 7: "Broken Blossoms" (1919, D. W. Griffith; silent), with Lillian Gish, Donald Crisp, and Richard Barthelmess.... April 9 at 9: "Raise the Red Lantern" (1992, Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).

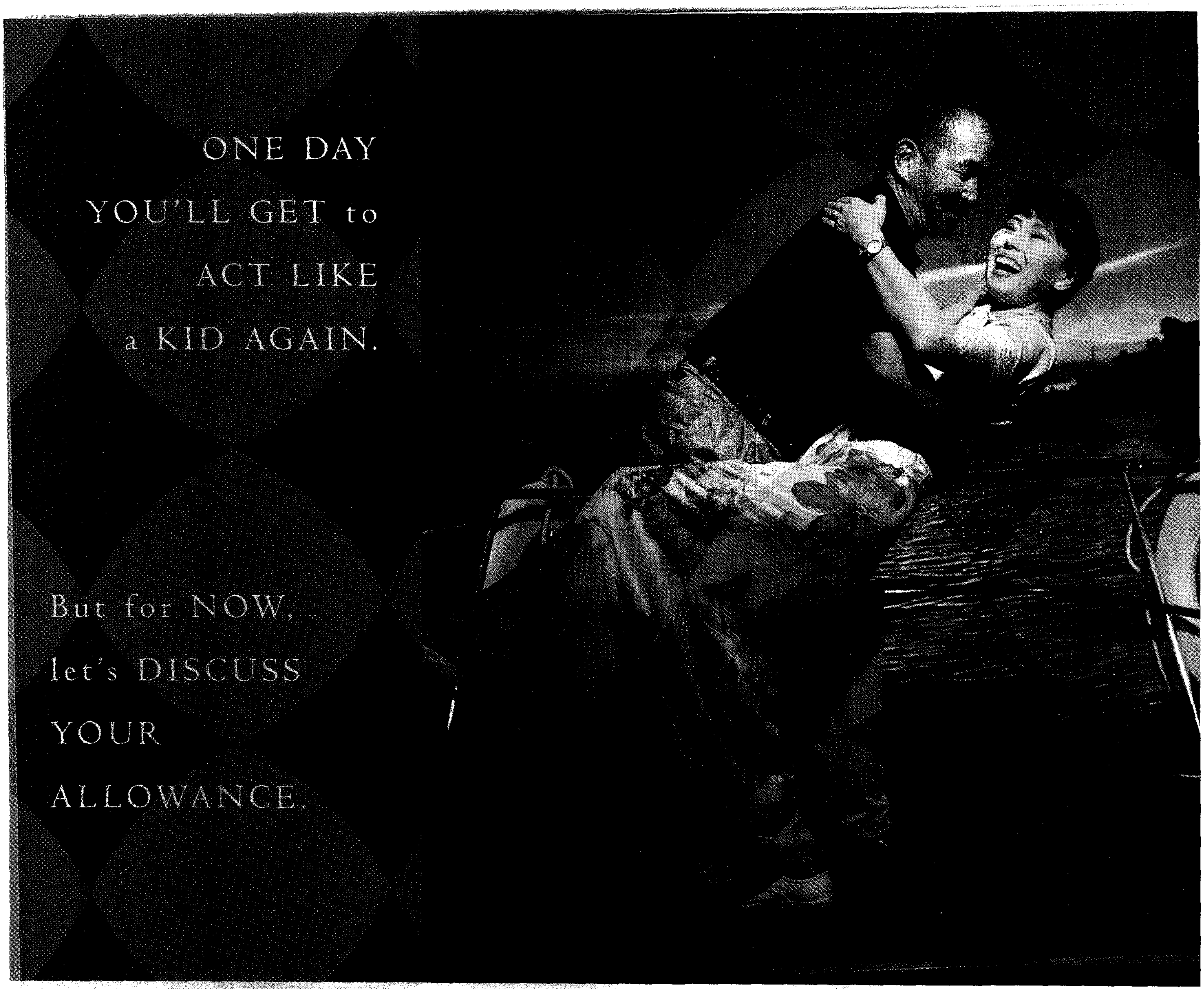
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—April 9 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Mina Tannenbaum" (1995, Martine Dugowson; in French), with Romane Bohringer.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—April 6 at 2 and 4:30: "Saturday Night Fever" (†).... ¶ Films starring Marlon Brando. April 7 at 2: "Reflections in a Golden Eye" (†).... April 7 at 4:30: "The Missouri Breaks" (1976, Arthur Penn), with Jack Nicholson.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Television work by John Frankenheimer. Through April 7: "The Last Summer" (1958), with Dennis Hopper, and "Winter Dreams" (1957), with John Cassavetes and Dana Wynter.... From April 9: "Clash by Night" (1957), with Lloyd Bridges, Kim Stanley, and E. G. Marshall, and "The Browning Version" (1959), with John Gielgud and Margaret Leighton.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Through April 7: Films by Gregory J. Markopoulos (1928-92).

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program of films from Latin America. April 5 at 7: "Jerico" (1990, Luis Alberto Lamata; a Venezuelan film, in Spanish).... April 6-7 at 2: "One Way or Another" (1974, Sara Gomez; a Cuban film, in Spanish).



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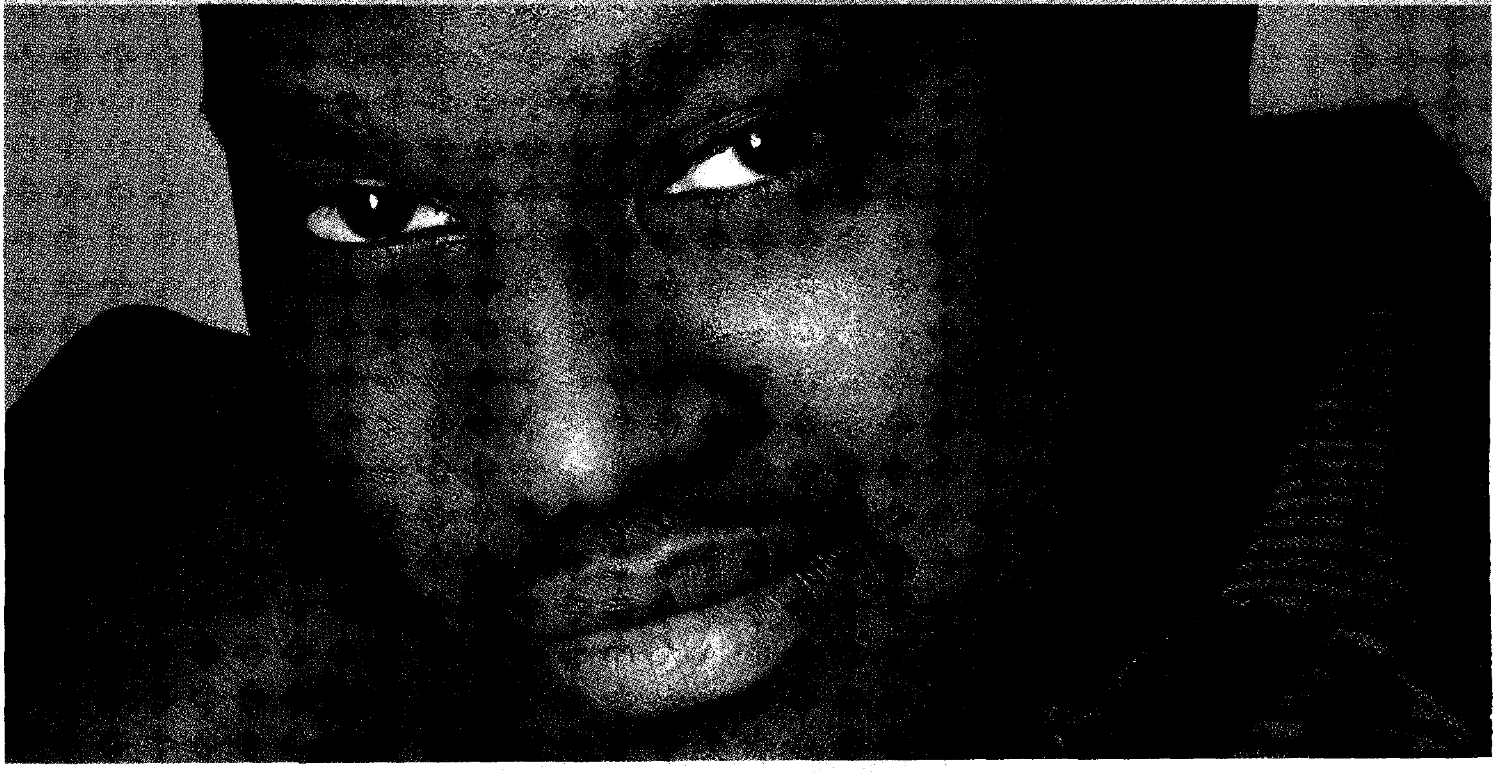
-Mo Vaughn, Boston Red Sox.



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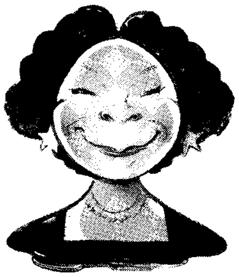
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

HOLLYWOOD BABBLE-ON: HANGING OUT AT THE OSCARS

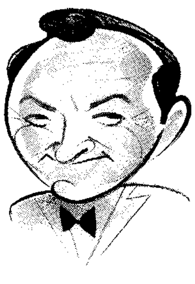
"Win or lose, who cares?" This bold and blatant lie was voiced by Mel Gibson on the evening of March 23rd. Two days later, in common with every other winner of an Academy Award, he looked as if he cared very much.

There is nothing new, let alone culpable, in such a change of heart; it is, indeed, strongly recommended under the rules of the emotional diplomacy by which Hollywood has long been governed. Anjelica Huston, whose dynastic pedigree is positively medieval by the standards of this town, explained how the system works. "Even those who don't care for competition find themselves getting involved, even if they don't want to, and end up getting whipped into a kind of frenzy," she said. She was speaking on Saturday night, with forty-eight hours to go before the announcement of Best Picture, and, looking round the room, you could tell that most people were still in the pre-whip stage. Our host was I.C.M.'s Ed Limato, who is a long-standing agent of so many stars that he was commonly believed to have signed up Hyakutake, the comet then heading for the Little Dipper, long before it swam into our ken. You don't make yourself visible to the naked eye without calling Ed.


Whoopi Goldberg

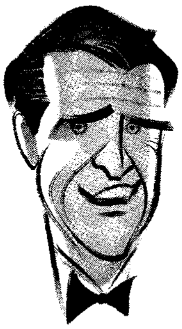
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC PALMA

When Ed decides to throw, or lightly toss, one of his pre-Oscar parties, the invitations—in this case, stiff cards dusted tastefully with pink spangles—are sent out only to those who can be relied upon not to look nervous about the forthcoming ceremony. The one scary thing about the whole evening was the bank of raw gray squid that lay waiting to be sizzled; it made you kind of glad that Sigourney Weaver, who has made three "Alien" pictures and is getting ready for a fourth, was not among those present. Also notable by its absence was the merest murmur of concern over the demonstration being threatened by the Reverend Jesse Jackson, who was indignant that only one of this year's hundred and sixty-six nominees was black. Questioned on the issue, Denzel Washington was supremely unfazed, but then Denzel Washington would remain cool if the French recommenced nuclear testing under his chair. "To protest an imbalance in the industry is one thing," he said. "To pinpoint a specific awards ceremony is another. People said to me, when I was nominated for 'Malcolm X' and Al Pacino was up for 'Scent of a Woman,' wouldn't it be a racial decision if he won and I didn't? And I said, 'Hey, the guy's been nominated eight times or whatever. I'd vote for him.' In fact, I *did* vote for him."


Kevin Spacey

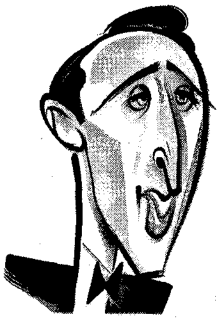
In the face of such gentlemanly conduct, you just knew that the Reverend's protest would burn away like mist. The English director Mike Figgis had a better idea. At the Independent Spirit Awards, earlier the same day, he said the only group that was overrepresented in Los Angeles was the English.

Kevin Spacey leaned against the bar chez Limato and said, "Albino Alligator." The barman looked up with fear in his face. Was Spacey ordering a cocktail—something white with bite that tastes like a sewer? It's every barman's nightmare: the request for a drink that, until now, he wasn't even aware existed. The man's hand lifted toward the gin in despair—surely the thing had Tanqueray in it somewhere?—and then dropped in relief. Spacey was simply telling us about directing his first movie.


Mel Gibson

All actors yearn to direct—or, at any rate, they say they do. When Nicolas Cage declared, in accepting the award for Best Actor, "I know it's not hip to say it, but I just love acting," there were many in the audience who took this touching confession as a coded message to the industry, meaning, "As yet, I have not seen a script that I wish to direct, but packages may be messengered to my agent from eight o'clock tomorrow morning." In keeping his ambition tamped down, Cage was an exception. Tom Hanks, smarter than most, has already shown his hand: his first feature, "That Thing You Do!," is a wrap. After winning the Oscar for Best Live Action Short, Christine Lahti remarked, "In directing, I found a newfound love; I'm hooked." She had just beaten off the challenge of four other directors, among them Griffin Dunne and Jeff Goldblum. Mel Gibson then turned the whole conceit briskly on its head when, holding his Best Director Oscar for "Braveheart," he said, "Like most directors, what I suppose I really want to do is act."

If you needed a master class in Oscar technique, the man to consult was James Cromwell. Equitable and kindly, like an ambassador who happened to have strayed into the movie business, he sat beside the pool at the Bel-Air Hotel and disclosed his plans for the ceremony: "I intend to enjoy every minute of it that I can." He then proceeded to consume a Sunday lunch so resoundingly vegetarian (a yolk-free mushroom omelette, no less) that even passersby who failed to recognize him would have instinctively connected him with "Babe." Cromwell—the son of the director John Cromwell, who himself once hosted the Oscars with Bob Hope—was nominated as Best Supporting Actor for his grizzled Farmer Hoggett. "It's not a leading role, but you have to carry the movie," he said. In a town where a liberal conscience involves little more than cracking Pat Buchanan jokes in public, Cromwell was one of the few stars prepared to go along with Jesse Jackson: "I have some sympathy for Jesse's protest, because it mirrors the larger problems of society."



Nicolas Cage

The smaller problems of Hollywood, however, are never far away. Cromwell said that his stepdaughter, Rosemary, has an agent. "And her first audition is today," added the proud father. Rosemary is twelve.

THE ENVELOPE, PL——

Monday's ceremony overshot by thirty-five minutes. This meant that various key awards were cancelled for lack of time. They were, instead, handed out Tuesday.

BEST ARRIVAL

The giant orange fibreglass hot dog in which the "Toy Story" director cruised to the foot of the red carpet.

WORST ACCENT

A tie between Whoopi Goldberg, for English, and Whoopi Goldberg, for Australian.

MOST GLAMOROUS THROWBACK TO THE SILENT ERA

Anjelica Huston, unplugged.

MOST DARING INSTANCE OF CRITICAL REVISIONISM

Jim Carrey, for introducing a mildly homoerotic flavor to the friendship of Buzz and Woody in "Toy Story."

MOST REGRETTABLE MOMENT OF RESTRAINT

Jim Carrey, for not adding Babe to the equation. Never pass up a porker joke, Jimbo.

THE LYLE MENENDEZ AWARD FOR GREAT ACTING THAT GETS YOU ABSOLUTELY NOWHERE IN THE END

Anthony Hopkins, for "Nixon."

THE ROBERT FROST AWARD FOR QUOTING ROBERT FROST IN UNPROMISING CIRCUMSTANCES

Chuck Jones.

THE BLOODY GLOVE AWARD FOR A DEAD CERTAINTY THAT JUST DIDN'T FIT THE OCCASION

"Apollo 13."

MOST ACCURATE DEPLOYMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Marleen Gorris, Dutch director of the Best Foreign Language Film, "Antonia's Line."

MOST SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO SCRAMBLE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, POUR IT INTO A BLENDER, AND LEAVE IT RUNNING

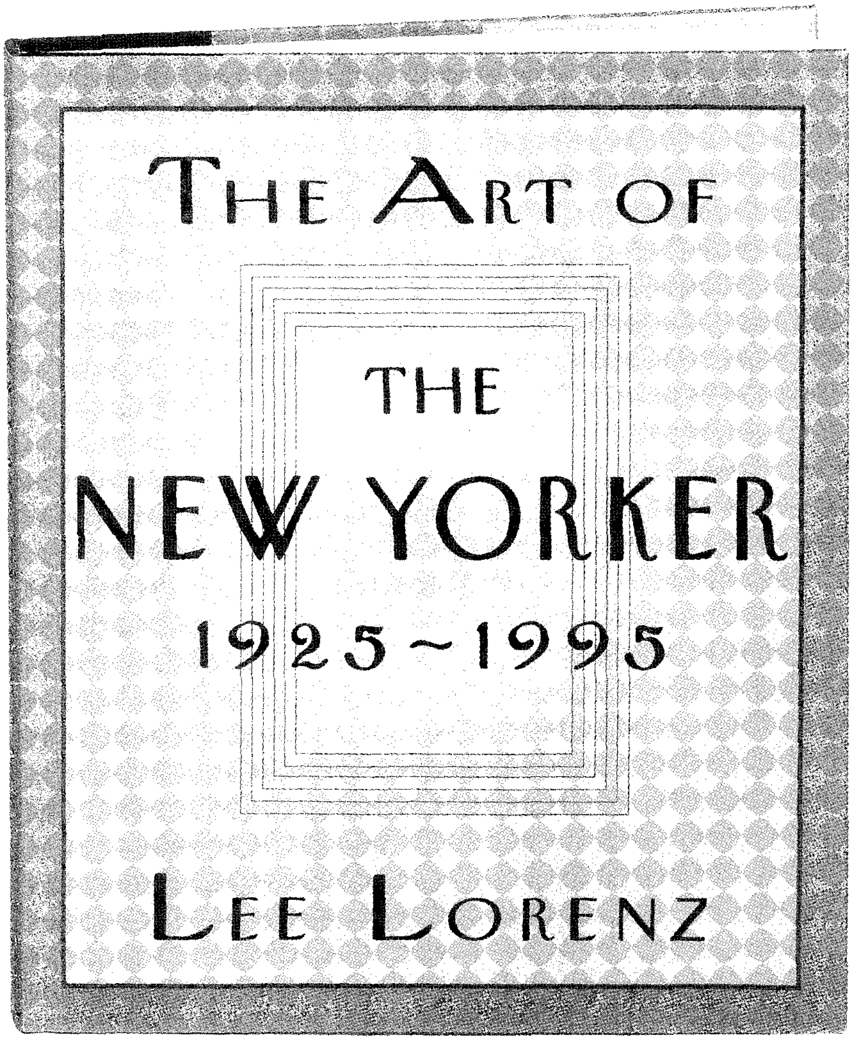
Sidney Poitier, for his "Rivers of the Mind" speech before announcing Best Picture. Easily confused with "Colors of the Wind."

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A DRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

Steven Seagal's date.

Two days before the ceremony, Spacey was on his mettle. He couldn't quite get over the delicious, Keyser Söze-like coincidence that Mare Winningham, a fellow-nominee this year, for "Georgia," was an old friend. "I wanted to change schools to be with her, *and I did*," Spacey said in triumph. He then proceeded, after a little light prompting, to reveal a flawless William Hurt impression that would have been hair-raising had it not consisted of one balding movie star playing another. Even this was trumped by Laura Dern, who sat there in shimmering silver-blue and, without any prompting whatsoever, interrupted her own serenity with a knockout impersonation of the young Muhammad Ali. What was going on here? Maybe it's a freak condition of the Oscar climate: just when the world congratulates them for being who they are, the beautiful people of Hollywood stay ahead of the game by pretending to be someone else.

Two hours after the ceremony, Spacey was himself again, but only just. He sat at a corner table in Mortons and clutched his Best Supporting Actor statuette, looking like the little boy that got the dog that got the cat that got the cream. "They're supposed to take it away to put my name on it, but they'll have to *tear* it away," he said. The ceremony had been a blur. "I don't have a clue what I said." He seemed reassured to learn that he had remembered: a) to thank his mom; and b) to hold back from attempting a Vanessa Williams impersonation. A disconcerting time, the Oscar season. Jim Carrey put it best: "There's something weird that happens to you when you're



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Told by Lee Lorenz, the magazine's art editor for two decades
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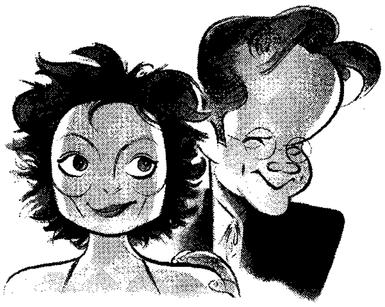
being watched by half a billion people." In Carrey's case, the weirdness never stops.

Rehearsal time at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion: according to connoisseurs, the most authentic Oscar experience. The Sunday-afternoon run-through was such a rich and thronging shambles that you could hardly imagine a watchable show emerging, twenty-four hours later, from the mess. The celebrities sauntered on in jeans to practice their presentations; Sandra Bullock thought her contribution had gone pretty well. "I saw a couple of people getting a little teary up in the back," she said. "You know, a little moist." As late as Sunday, there was a plan to greet the hopefuls for Best Actor and Best Actress not just with clips from their nominated films but with a montage from their previous œuvre. In the case of Elisabeth Shue, née "Cocktail," this seemed downright discourteous: "I mean, thanks a lot," she said. "I want to put that lot behind me." In place of winners, selected stagehands trotted up, gathered the statuettes, and delivered ersatz acceptance speeches—"I'd like to thank my twelve-and-a-half lovely children," and so on. A tip for the superstitious, or for anyone placing underhand bets: a winner's name read out at any given rehearsal bears no relation to the name of the eventual victor, and therefore cuts one horse out of the field. Someone was heard phoning Lindsay Doran, the producer of "Sense and Sensibility," with the non-good news: "Just to let you know that you won."



Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins

On the morning of the Oscars, *Variety* reported that Mel Gibson would be wearing a waistcoat woven from his "family tartan," and also that he had been fitted out at Giorgio Armani on Rodeo Drive. The relation between these two facts was not explored. Gibson looked all right that night, but then the sixty-eighth Academy Awards ceremony was faintly disappointing to those of us who like to see famous people putting on clothes that make them look like an explosion at the Jelly Belly plant. We saw a fine parade of Empire lines and silk sheaths, and by far the most impressive array of natural greens since Linda Blair showed off the highlights of her supper in "The Exorcist." There was peppermint, aquamarine, verdigris, iceberg, eau-de-nil, and a lemon-and-lime special from Mare Winningham. There were pinkish grays so soft and subtle that onlookers were reminded of the furring found in uncleaned kettles. Then there was Susan Sarandon's Dolce & Gabbana ball gown, a sort of one-night stand between chocolate and bronze; it exactly matched the hue of her hair, although which had come first was a matter of urgent debate.

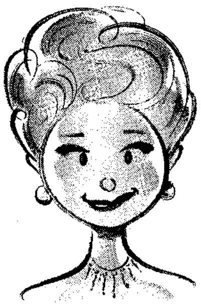
She was accompanied by Tim Robbins, whose jacket was scaly, sharkish, and distressingly similar to what he wore last year. How can a guy of such evident sense, whose movies are a rebuff to bad glitz, opt on an annual basis for a garment that was apparently woven overnight from strands of crude oil? The men always let their ladies down on Oscar night. Hollywood is congenitally unable to grasp that the great advantage of a dinner jacket is that it is, in essence, a uniform. The basics are unwavering, the variations minimal. When you are asked to wear a black tie, do not take this as a concealed excuse not to wear a black tie. Do not be tempted by the current fad that omits the tie altogether in favor of a single black stud. You may find this sexy, but to the watching world it appears that you have leapt up from an emergency tracheotomy to attend the show.

Jim Carrey

If you must be a maverick, do it in spades. Again, Mike Figgis led the way. He strode around in a long black frock coat of rare magnificence. Topped with his imposing frizz of hair, it brought to mind a radical bishop from the pages of Trollope, pondering schism with solemn glee. "I intend to treat the whole thing as performance art," Figgis had declared. He was as good as his word.

Last year's Academy Awards had been billed as a straight fight between "Pulp Fiction" and "Forrest Gump": dark versus light, stormy versus calm, McEnroe versus Edberg. This year, the only one-on-one took place Sunday at MGM/UA's party at Eclipse, on Melrose: fellow-nominees Nicolas Cage and Sean Penn broke off a friendly conversation to indulge in a brief bout of air-boxing.

The 1996 awards were supposed to be more open and unpredictable, but in the event Hollywood closed ranks. It dumped five awards into the kilted lap of "Braveheart," a shaggy-Scot story that was made by an actor who looks cute with an Oscar in his fist. And the show itself? Well, it passed—quickly at first, but ending up at slug speed. Still, the percussion ensemble Stomp were a hit, and they confirmed Tom Hanks's view that "the big numbers look a lot cheesier on TV. When you see them live, they look kind of cool." This sounded highly unlikely but was, on closer inspection, quite true, especially if you were canny enough, or lowly enough, to get a seat near the back. Those of us in the stratosphere could both chew on the flavor of the live show and sneak out to the bar for regular transfusions of champagne, in the way that television viewers visit the fridge. One guy, an old Oscar hand, was snacking hard on chocolate bars to keep his strength up, like a mountaineer.



Mira Sorvino

Sympathy peaked for Christopher Reeve and Kirk Douglas, and for Bryan Adams's endearing confidence in his own voice. Nobody seemed to mind the idea of treating Holocaust survivors with the same rapture that attends a comfortably paid performer. (Why does *applauding* Gerda Weissmann Klein seem, in a curious way, the most embarrassing insult to her experience?) The major disappointment, apart from that of Elisabeth Shue, was that no one from the "Braveheart" team had the courage to mount the stage with a face half smothered in blue woad. Last Monday was all the brighter for Oprah Winfrey's blinding jewels, but, next year, how about upping the wattage even further—have the stars turn up in the guise of their most recent dramatic roles? It was soggy enough when Mira Sorvino reduced Paul Sorvino to tears, but just imagine: she could have made Henry Kissinger weep. You don't see that every day. —Anthony Lane

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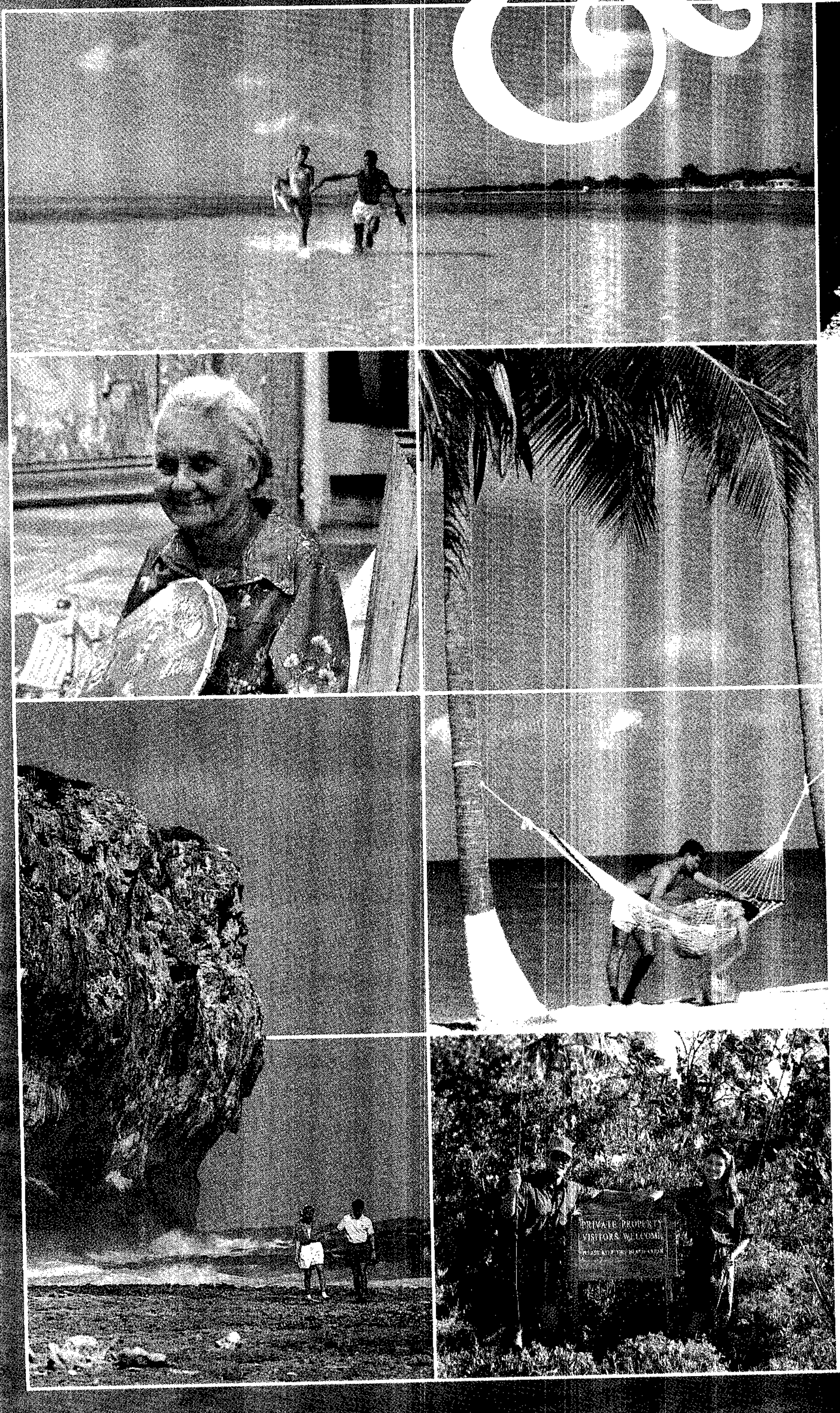

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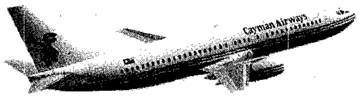

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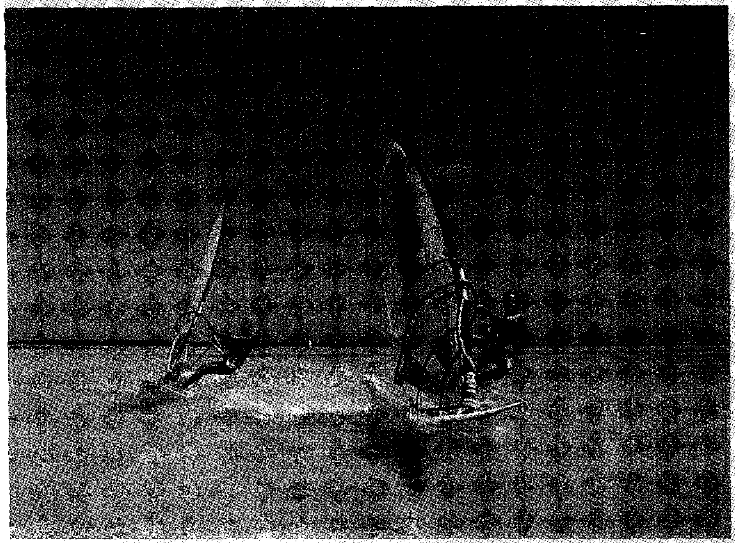
reamy coral-sand beaches. Transparent blue water. Palm-shaded hammocks. That's the scene in the Cayman Islands—a tranquil trio of islands where courtliness lives on and the islands set the tone with their striking beauty. There's the broad expanse of Seven Mile Beach on Grand Cayman. On Cayman Brac, 140-foot bluffs rise behind the dunes, rewarding visitors with breathtaking views. Little Cayman is a private paradise of idyllic beaches, mangrove forests and lagoons. And beneath the shimmering waters surrounding the Caymans—some of the best diving in the world.



Glide through an underwater grotto and meet a school of tarpon so big that it sways like a giant silver curtain. In the 12-foot-deep waters of Stingray City, stingrays mingle with divers in sun-dappled waters.

Amidst nature's serene beauty there's also drama. At Grand Cayman's Blow Holes, waves crash through holes in the coral, sending spectacular geysers shooting skyward. Reminders of the Caymans' swashbuckling past remain in gold and silver coins complete with documentation—salvaged from sunken vessels.

Caymans' natural splendor and traditional ways spell a welcome combination for all visitors.

U.S. Virgin Islands:

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t. Thomas rises out of the sea, a range of green hills peaking at 1,550 feet above its capital, Charlotte Amalie. White and pastel houses stand out on steep, green hillsides above the port city whose waterfront alleyways lined by old Danish warehouses have been transformed into a seaside shopping center. Hipped roofs of corrugated metal top buildings with heavy-wooded shutters framing verandas and arcades of Moorish-inspired arches.

Winding roads lead from the shops of Charlotte Amalie into steep hills and green pastures where cattle graze placidly, then descend to a seacoast renowned for its beauty. It is an island of sophisticated hotels and international restaurants.

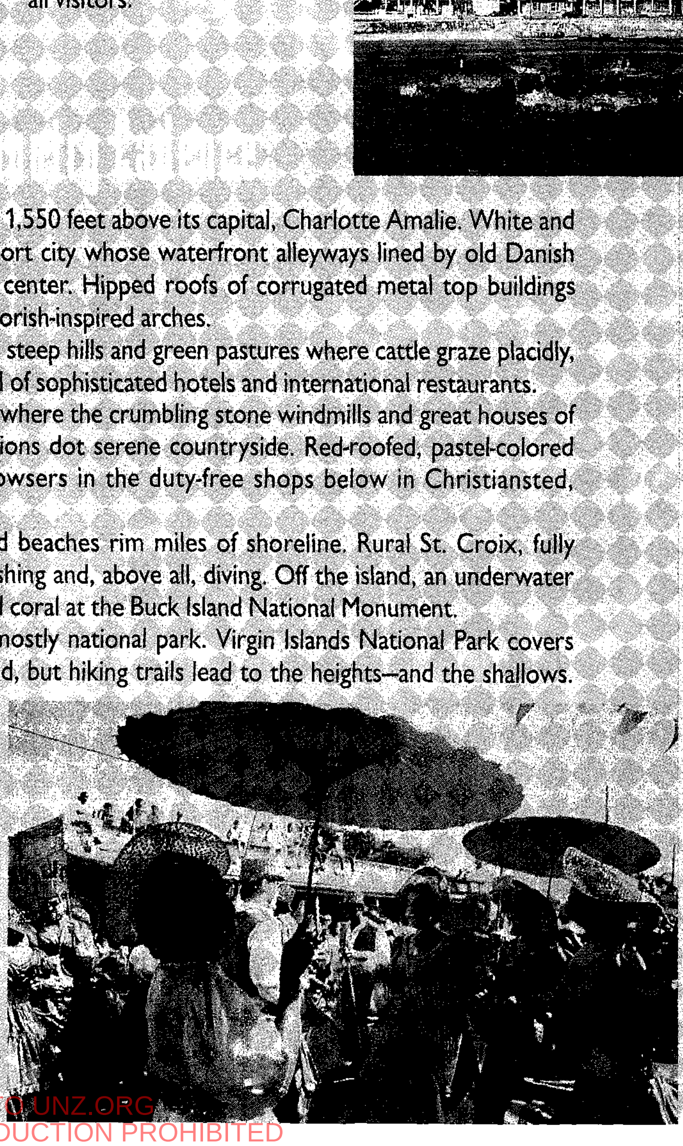
A totally different ambience rules on neighboring St. Croix, where the crumbling stone windmills and great houses of long-gone Danish planters and their 19th-century sugar plantations dot serene countryside. Red-roofed, pastel-colored buildings with overhanging second-story balconies shade browsers in the duty-free shops below in Christiansted, a low-key, jewel box of a town.

And in the countryside beyond, paradise found. Soft-sand beaches rim miles of shoreline. Rural St. Croix, fully recovered from Hurricane Hugo, has it all—swimming, sailing, fishing and, above all, diving. Off the island, an underwater trail leads snorkelers and divers through a wide variety of fish and coral at the Buck Island National Monument.

Quietest of all: St. John, the picture-perfect island that is mostly national park. Virgin Islands National Park covers two-thirds of the island. There are only three roads on the island, but hiking trails lead to the heights—and the shallows. Aboveground hiking trails lead to scenic lookout points on verdant mountain tops. They turn downward to the sea as well, leading through shallow waters.

Snorkelers can follow underwater trails maintained by the U.S. Park Service. Windsurfers and Sunfish catch the wind rippling the water's surface.

The romance of the past remains in the U.S. Virgin Islands with their green hills, plantation ruins and, on St. John, mysterious petroglyphs. Accompanying them, all the accoutrements of home: U.S. currency, cable television and state-of-the-art telecommunication.



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Trinidad & Tobago: Rich & Rare

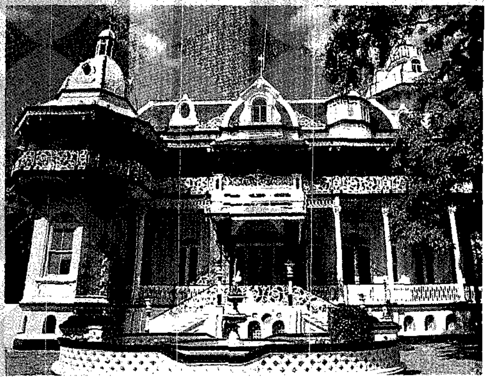
A flock of long-necked ibis circle above the mangrove before settling among the branches. Skylines hold the silhouettes of both cathedrals and mosques. The two-island nation of Trinidad & Tobago is like *callaloo*, a local dish made from an unlikely combination of ingredients. Africans and Indians dominate the ethnic mix today, but Chinese, European and Amerindian are part of the blend, too. The result: a destination of sights and sounds evocative of faraway continents in a Caribbean setting of white sand, blue sea and bright sunshine.

Port of Spain is a mix of modern high-rises and 19th-century architecture. Colonial mansions look like castles, and promenades are named after cricket heroes. It is a kaleidoscope of a city, with street markets teeming with vendors and women in flowing robes brushing by.

Its coral reefs and abundant marine life make Tobago one of the best dive sites in the Caribbean. A dive can bring an encounter with a friendly giant manta ray with a 10-foot wing span. In terms of the number of species of birds per square mile, Trinidad & Tobago rank among the top ten countries in the world. The islands have 2,300 different flowering shrubs and plants—including 700 kinds of orchids. In the forests that cover much of the island, ocelot, howler monkeys, and armadillos roam.

It's a unique mosaic—a crossroad where bits and pieces of Africa, South America, Europe and Asia meet. Indian restaurants serve foods never tasted in India, parang songs are sung in a Spanish neighboring Venezuelans can't understand, and the British can't master the lilt of the island English. Symbolizing it all: the island music, steelpan, representing the beauty and creativity of a *callaloo* country.

© Bob Krist



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Puerto Rico:

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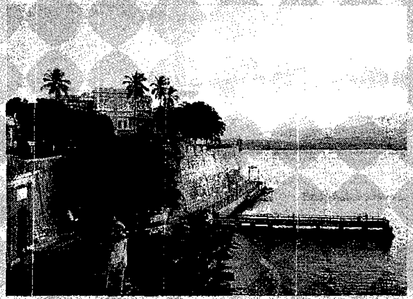
ake an island. Surround it with beach—nearly 300 miles of it. Anchor it with a medieval fortress backed by a picturesque old town. Spread championship golf courses along dramatic coastlines. Lay mountains down the middle; top with lush rain forest. Lace with phosphorescent bays and mangrove forests. People it all with U.S. citizens, proud of their home. Put it just a few hours' nonstop flight from most major U.S. cities. Picture Puerto Rico.


© Bob Krist

The cobblestone streets of Old San Juan, flowers cascading off wrought-iron balconies, and fountains merrily splashing within interior courtyards evoke the elegance of a distant Spain. Balancing that Old World flavor are the gleaming towers of a cosmopolitan 20th-century city, one with fast-paced casinos, international entertainment and sophisticated restaurants.

Linking San Juan to the island that spreads beyond it: almost endless beach. Some are long, curving arcs of pale sand shaded by coconut palms and bordered by calm waters. Others are small pockets wedged between headlands with a century-old lighthouse rising above.

Curving along the coast beyond the beaches are championship golf courses. Puerto Rico has so many it's been dubbed "Scotland in the sun." Designed in harmony with the graceful curves of the Puerto Rican landscape, courses seem to have been gently sculpted by wind and waves.

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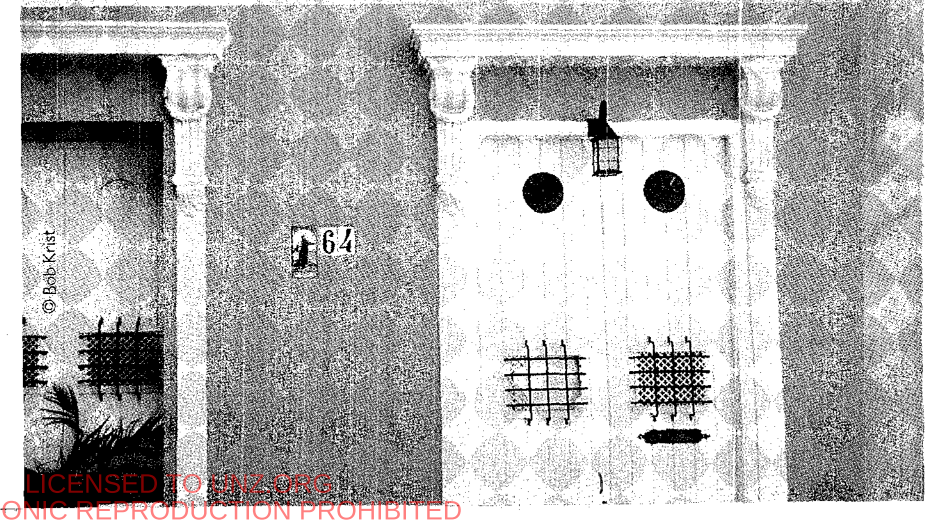
The Bahamas

Endless Variety

ith 700 islands, and 2,000 cays and islets spread across 100,000 square miles of ocean, the Bahamas are not one destination but many, making its variety virtually limitless.

To the north, sails snap in the blue waters of the Abacos, the sailing capital of the Bahamas. A distinctive, red-striped, kerosene-powered 17th-century lighthouse stands watch over Elbow Cay. A reminder of the dangers of the past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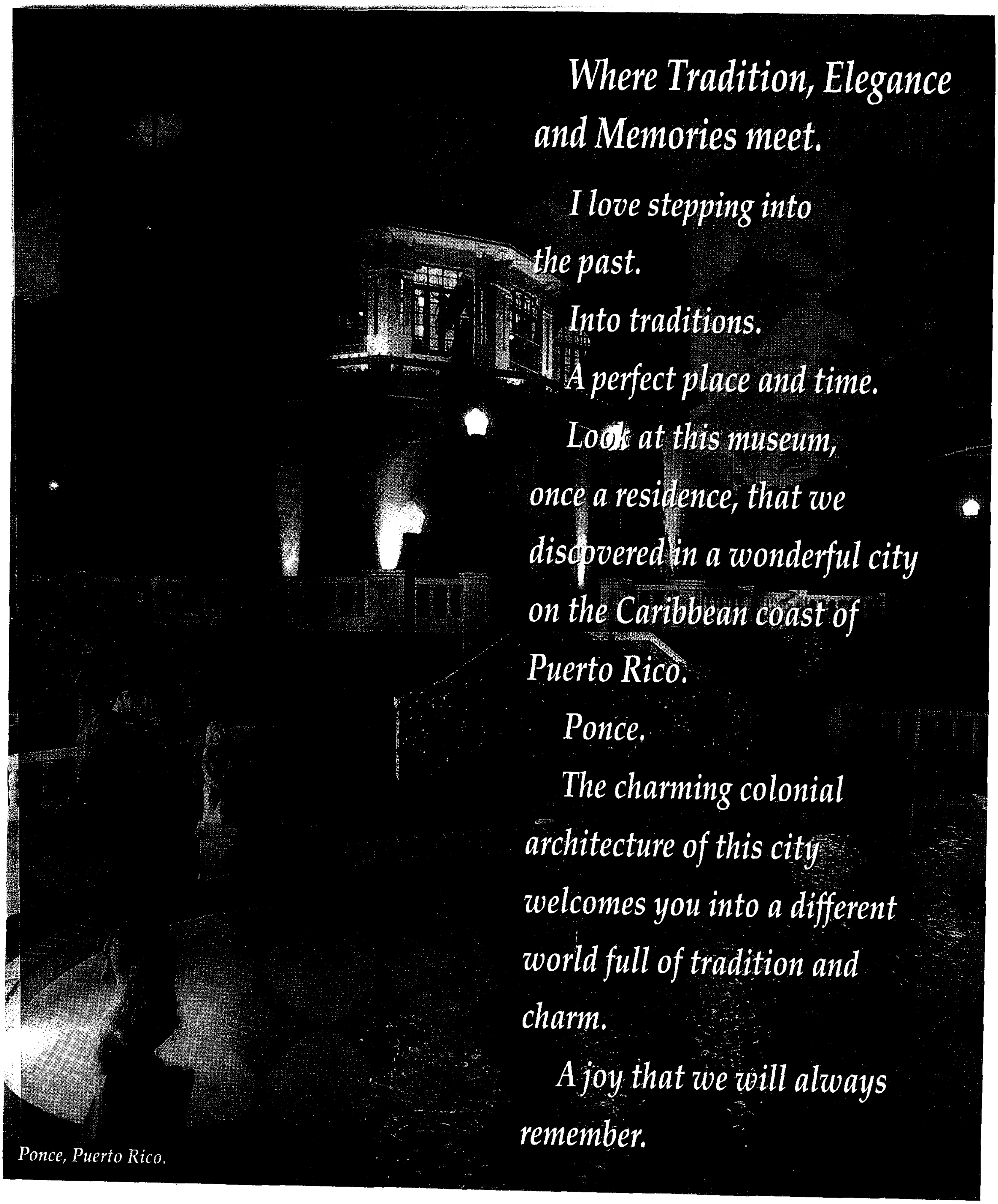

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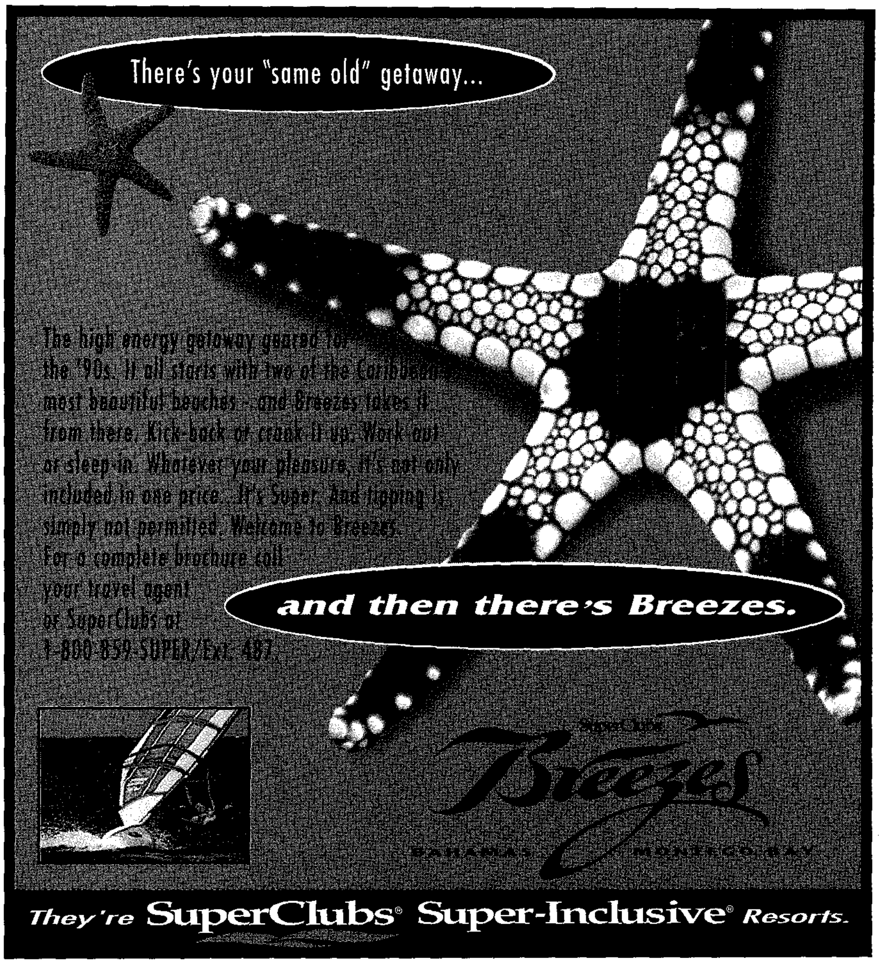

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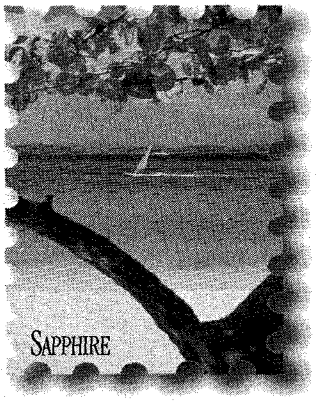

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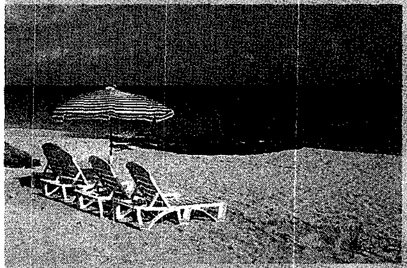
The Bahamas lies offshore in a reef under 30 feet of water—the wreckage of a Spanish galleon, its cannons and anchors strewn along the coral.

Miles southwest, other underwater mysteries await divers off Andros Island, which has the world's third-largest barrier reef. Here are fathomless "blue holes," deep pools of cobalt and ultramarine waters, as well as underwater grottoes and shipwrecks.

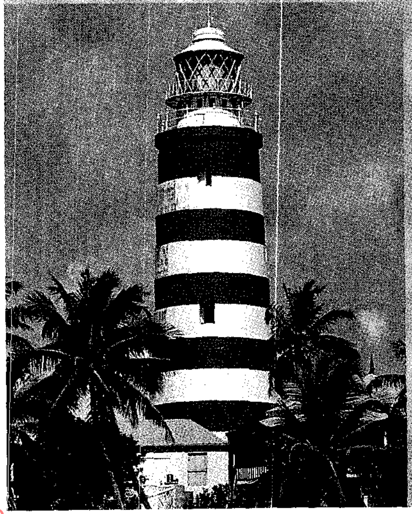
In the east, miles of pink sand beach border Eleuthera and Harbour Island. White, gingerbread-style clapboard houses edged by picket fences and exotic flowers give the feel of a tropical Cape Cod. Snorkelers can easily reach reefs just yards offshore to see parrot fish, angelfish, rays, darnels and butterfly fish.



© Amanda Clement

And, in the salt marshes and national park that cover half of Inagua Island, tens of thousands of endangered West Indian pink flamingos fluff their bright plumage.

Outside of the cities, each of the many islands of the Bahamas has its own distinct character and rich history. Binding them all together: the tranquil rhythms of traditional Bahamian life.



orn of volcanic eruptions, Bonaire is an underwater mountain whose flat top just breaks through the surface of the Caribbean Sea. Fringe reefs lie off the beaches surrounding the island showcasing brilliant jewelfish, redlip blennies, parrot fish, and lush coral growth.

Bonaire has worked hard to preserve its natural paradise—all the waters surrounding the island are a marine preserve. And on land, thousands of pink flamingos nest in the preserve Bonaire created for them, their neon plumage brightening the landscape. Nearly 200 species of birds as well as thousands of varieties of cacti and lizards thrive in Washington-Slagbaai Park, one of the Caribbean's first national parks.

An easygoing air pervades the island, which means visitors can kick back and relax in the sun that warms the island and its waters.

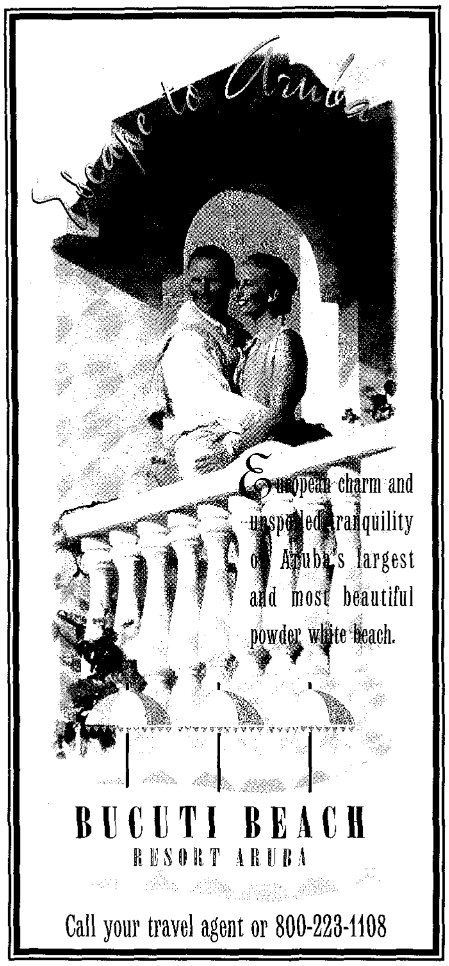
ruba is an island of many faces. Miles of beaches and clear, quiet waters line its southwest shores. To the northeast, the sea thunders against a wild and rugged coastline, carving a dramatic land bridge out of coral cliffs. Located well outside of the hurricane belt, Aruba is dry and sunny year-round, as if a piece of Arizona—complete with golf course—had landed in the blue Caribbean.

On land, lighthouses still stand, guiding sailors, and in the water, divers can discover one of the Caribbean's largest wrecks, the German freighter Antilla, scuttled during World War II.

Cordiality is also part of Aruba's heritage, a national trait immortalized in the island's anthem. So, no matter where visitors find themselves, they'll encounter Aruba's spirit of *bon bini*—welcome.

t. Vincent and The Grenadines arc 45 miles through the Caribbean, the smaller islands trailing St. Vincent like a kite's tail. Once known only to yachtsmen and divers their pristine natural beauty is just now being discovered by other tourists.

Dense forests, mountain ridges and waterfalls contrast with lush fields on St. Vincent. A 4,000-foot volcano towers over the north end of the island; western hills descend to black and gold sand beaches. Most of the smaller Grenadine islands are no more than a few miles long and encircled by white coral sand beaches.



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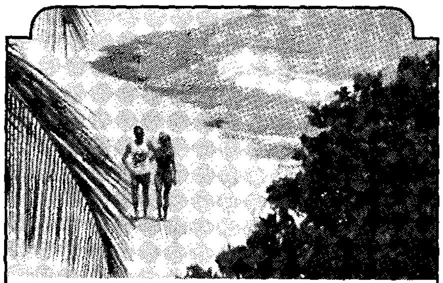

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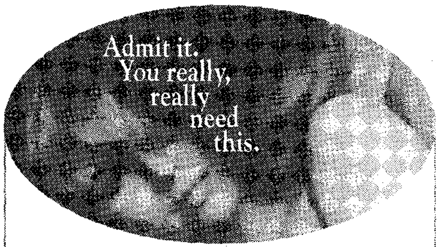

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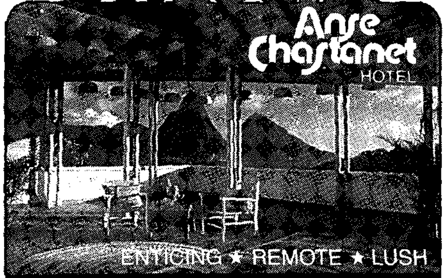

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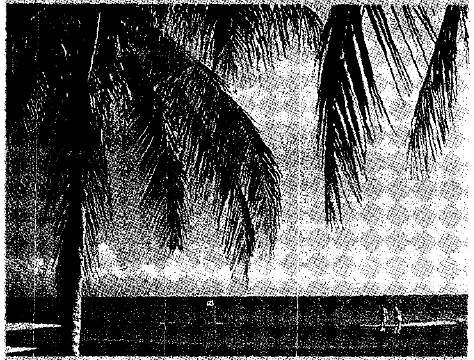
Jamaica
Bold And Beautiful

Columbus called it "the fairest land ever eyes beheld...the mountains touch the sky." Its name derives from the Arawak Xaymaca, the "Land of Wood and Water." And it remains so today. The mountainous island—nearly half of it is 1,000 feet above sea level—is a deep jewel green. Its dramatic terrain includes valleys, cliffs and bays.

What to do besides admire Jamaica's beauty? Try sightseeing on a bamboo raft on one of Jamaica's 120 rivers. Golfers can enjoy several championship golf courses. Snorkelers and scuba divers can explore a Jamaica that's as beautiful below as it is above. There are horse rides along forest trails and mountain hikes and bargains at straw markets.



There's a Jamaica for just about everyone. Couples-only resorts reserve sun and sea for romance. Children revel in a never-ending list of activities that adds a whole new dimension to the family vacation. There are carefree all-inclusives and elegant resorts, charming inns and private villas.

And, everywhere, are the Jamaicans themselves—gregarious and proud of their beautiful island. They are a people of many origins—Africa, Europe and Asia—but one home. And they've made Jamaica one of the most accommodating places in the Caribbean.

[illegible]

amed for the powdered-sugar consistency of the white sand beaches that slope into the waters surrounding it, Anguilla is the quintessential coral island. Its 12 miles of beaches are lined by sea grapes and cliffs. Offshore lie islets and cays whose secluded beaches are accessible by boat.

It is a water sports mecca. Boat racing is the national sport, stemming from the island's seafaring heritage, and deep-sea fishing remains popular today. Gentle trade winds power windsurfers. And divers explore reefs and wrecks rich in marine life, located in a protected underwater park.

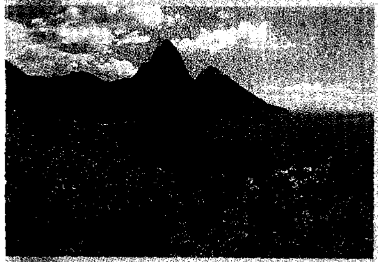
British Virgin Islands:
The Caribbean The Way It Used To Be

orn eons ago of undersea volcanic eruptions, the 60-odd islands that compose the BVI have a breathtaking panorama of land, sea and sky that massages cares away.

Extending for 35 miles along the waters of Sir Francis Drake Channel, even the most remote parts of the BVI are within a half-hour of the two major islands, Tortola and Virgin Gorda. This makes scuba diving and snorkeling trips, windsurfing tours and sailing easy to fit into a day that includes plenty of beach lounging. And, at day's end, setting sun and sea meld into a portrait of nature's harmony.

St. Lucia: Simply Beautiful

he lush greenery of St. Lucia evokes images of more distant islands like Tahiti or Bora Bora. Behind its palm-ringed beaches rise the Pitons, twin peaks towering a half mile above the sea.



St. Lucia has kept many of its traditional ways—visitors to its tiny fishing villages can see the boats arrive each afternoon with the day's catch. It's a combination of simplicity and beauty that makes it easy for visitors to relax and recover from the fast pace of home.

here isn't one Caribbean, but many, a world of islands and island chains each with its own distinctive character, its own unique flavor. Yet despite their differences they all share the same pale-green sea, balmy breezes and extraordinary beauty usually seen only in photographs. So whether in search of natural wonders—below the water and above it—culinary delights, excitement or tranquillity, travelers will find what they're looking for among the islands of the Caribbean. After all, the camera never lies.

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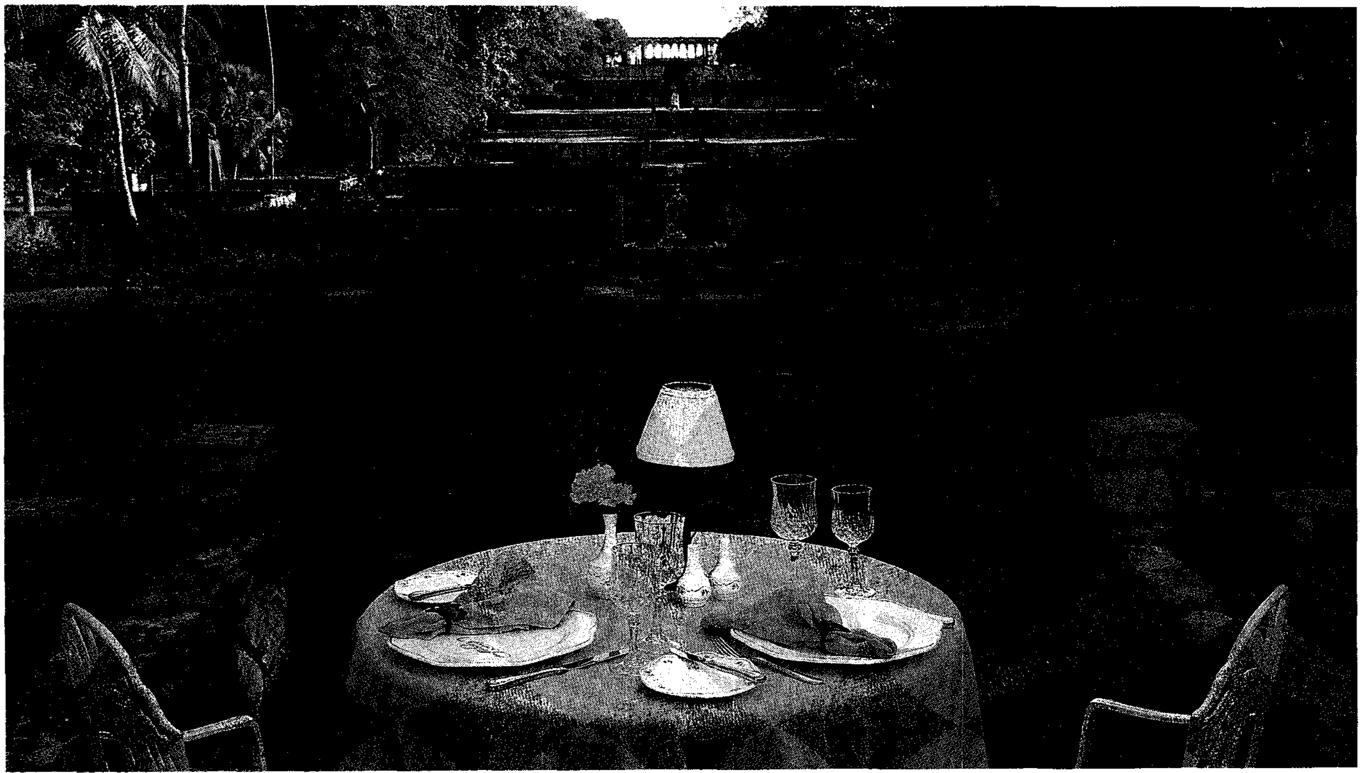

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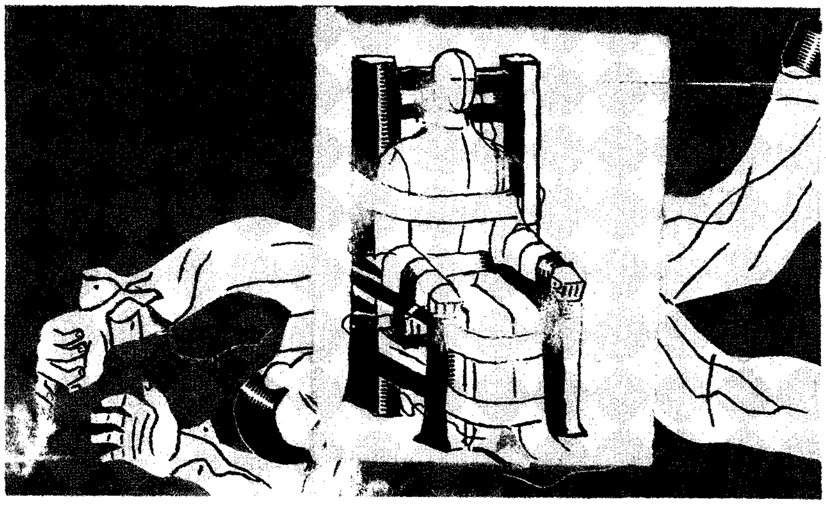
While the Governor maneuvers to get the death penalty enforced, his new Capital Defender is equally determined that it will never happen.

BY JAMES TRAUB



The Capital Defender Office is likely to represent the alleged murderer of a Bronx policeman in what promises to be a death-penalty test case.

BRIAN CRONIN

KEVIN DOYLE is an ardent Catholic and a passionate moralist who in moments of high seriousness slips into a pontifical mode. Doyle is New York State's Capital Defender, which is to say that he runs the state-funded office that represents indigent defendants charged under New York's new death-penalty statute. One evening last summer, as Doyle sat in an office in lower Manhattan decorated with a map of New York State and a photograph of Martin Luther King, Jr., he raised a forefinger in the air and declared to an audience of one, "District attorneys in this state realize that to casually bring a capital indictment will be a mistake, because every capital case will be litigated with an intensity and a depth with which they are not familiar, and will be commensurate with the societal attempt to take a human life." Prosecutors who fail to recognize this fact, Doyle went on, "will, I'm certain, have a different view in a very short period of time."

Doyle's declaration had the brassy ring of bravado, but he was, in fact, speaking from experience. In five and a half years as a staff attorney for the Alabama Capital Representation Resource Center, a federally funded public defenders' group, Doyle never had a client whom he had defended at trial sentenced to death. The same was true of the other attorneys at the resource center. "Where there is competent counsel at the trial level, which has been a rare occurrence, the success rate of prosecutors in getting the death penalty hovers near zero," Eric M. Freedman, a professor of constitutional law at Hofstra, says. The reason that there are so many prisoners on death row, according to Doyle, is that in most states indigent defendants have to make do with untrained and underpaid private lawyers.

You have to wonder if New York's Governor George Pataki knew what he was doing when he agreed to include an independent, well-financed public defenders' office in the death-penalty statute. Pataki, who made capital punishment one of the core issues of his 1994 campaign, has argued that the threat of execution serves as an important deterrent to crime. He has been openly impatient with the slow pace of capital indictments: only three have been filed since the law took effect, last September 1st. Ten days ago,

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frustrated by the apparent refusal of the Bronx District Attorney, Robert Johnson, to seek the death penalty in a case involving the fatal shooting of a policeman, the Governor forced Johnson out of the case and replaced him with the New York State Attorney General, Dennis Vacco, who is another capital-punishment enthusiast. Both Johnson and the Capital Defender Office (acting independently) are likely to move to have Vacco's appointment vacated. Should they fail, Vacco is almost certain to seek the death penalty for the alleged shooter, Angel Diaz, whom the C.D.O. is defending. Governor Pataki will have his test case. But if Doyle and his colleagues do their jobs well, it's unlikely that Diaz or anyone else in New York will be executed.

LIKE many people in his profession, Kevin Doyle, at forty, is old enough to have been mesmerized by the moral struggle of the civil-rights movement but too young to have done any marching of his own. When he was growing up, his heroes were Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Berrigan brothers. In the eighties, Doyle spent six years as a Legal Aid lawyer in New York, but it was only after he went down South and started working on capital cases that he found his calling. In the late eighties, during a brief stint with a Wall Street law firm, he had agreed to do some pro-bono work on a death-penalty appeal in Alabama. "I had the transcript in my home, and I showed it to my wife," Doyle recalls. It was the closing argument in the trial's "penalty phase." In a death-penalty case, if a jury finds a defendant guilty, a second trial immediately ensues—the penalty phase, in which the jury must choose between execution and a lesser sentence, usually life without parole. "And she read it, and her comment was 'God, I hope this guy had a good lawyer,' " Doyle goes on. "And I said, 'Mary, that *was* the lawyer.' The whole thing ran to less than a page." It wasn't the fault of the lawyer, Doyle says, but of the system, which farmed out legal work in capital cases at the rate of forty dollars an hour.

That system, Doyle became convinced, was specifically designed to convey defendants, most of them poor and black, to death row as swiftly as possible. "I've seen several summations in which a prosecutor analogized to Old Yeller," Doyle says. "It's not that we're putting him out of his misery but that we're putting him out of *our* misery." This cavalier attitude in the face of death staggered Doyle, as it staggers virtually every lawyer who goes down South to try death-penalty cases. This may explain why so many capital-defense lawyers are far more horrified by the evil of the criminal-justice system than by the evil of which their own clients stand accused, and often convicted.

Despite the years down South, Doyle is still recognizably a scrappy Irish kid from the Bronx, with the metabolism of a fire engine and a New York accent that renders "law" as "lore." He is in many ways supremely suited to his profession. He has endless reserves of moral indignation, a sharp mind, and a charming way with a joke. And yet there is a sense of propriety, and even conservatism, about Doyle that is unusual in his highly radicalized profession. He is probably the only prominent member of the capital bar whose father and two uncles were policemen. In a world that is filled with loners living on late-night pizza, Doyle is a family man with three children. He is also a steady churchgoer, and opposes capital punishment—when life without parole is an alternative—as a violation of Catholic teaching and of Jesus' example of mercy. (John Cardinal O'Connor made a similar argument in a much publicized address a week ago.)

Doyle happens to be on comfortable terms with Aquinas and the Church Fathers. Listening to him, you realize that capital law is one of the few professions where it helps to have a strong grounding in teleology. The Supreme Court, as Doyle often points out, has described the jury's deliberations on a capital sentence as a process of moral reasoning, and when Doyle talks about how he persuades a jury to keep his clients off death row his language grades from the tactical to the spiritual. "Most trial lawyers are very good for the trumpet and brass section," Doyle says. "They're good with the hard nose. They're good with the logic. They're good with the burden of proof. They're not so great with the string section. I don't mean the sappy pulling of strings. I mean doing the kind of sentencing advocacy that convinces the jury, No. 1, that life without parole is not the equivalent of dinner with the Governor and a ticker-tape parade and, more important, that there are things about an individual's life that make a jury say, 'There but for the grace of God . . .' Not too loudly, not even ten per cent, but enough identification that this person is a human being, and enough acknowledgment of how influences interact with free will to bring people to different places, that they'll decide that this very harsh punishment of making someone socially dead"—life without parole—"is enough."

"You're responding beautifully. Let's go ahead and see what happens if we increase your deductible."

AN essential paradox of capital law is that although the great majority of Americans support capital punishment, a lawyer with the skills that Doyle describes can usually persuade a jury of death-penalty advocates that mercy is the better part of justice. But this persuasion requires a vast commitment of time, resources, and emotional energy by defense attorneys: they have to learn to use a language they've never used before, make strategic calculations they've never made before, and make them under the pressure of the highest stakes.

One of the most important tasks that Doyle faced when he became Capital Defender was to organize and train a network of private attorneys and public defenders to supplement the work of the fifty-person C.D.O. staff. At the end of October, I attended one of these training sessions, which was held at a conference center in Westchester. The first speaker was David Bruck, a well-known attorney in the capital-defense field who had defied expectations by convincing a jury that it should give a sentence of life in prison to Susan Smith, the young South Carolina mother who drowned her two sons. Bruck had gone to extraordinary lengths to unearth information about Smith that would make her chilling act seem almost predestined: he had spent months investigating her background, had hired social workers and mental-health experts, and had put dozens of witnesses on the stand. His defense had been an enormous effort, and an expensive one. Some jurors later said that they had been prepared to vote for death until Bruck pleaded his penalty-phase case, after which their pity for the defendant overcame their rage at her deed.

At the training session, Bruck recreated his famous summation. "You saw the history of depression in her bloodlines going back three generations on both sides of her family—the alcoholism, the depression, the attempted suicides," he had told the jurors. "Was that a choice that she made? No. The losing of her father to suicide when she was six and a half years old—was that a choice that she made? Her depression, her obsession with suicide when she was a very young girl—you decide if that was a choice that she made." Then Bruck had shifted direction. "You have a choice, too," he went on. "It's not going to help the victims' family on this side of the courtroom to crush the hearts of the victims"—Susan's own family and friends—"on this side." He spoke of the Biblical story, in John 8, of the adulteress whom Jesus saved from stoning. He speculated about the ordinary citizens who decided to drop their stones. How did they explain it to the neighbors? "We know that the people were tested that day, and we know that they passed that test," Bruck said quietly. "It could be that only *one* of you will be tested. And all the other eleven jurors will be part of the test." This was an ingenious way of putting steel in the spine of the one or two jurors who might be holdouts.

Presenting mitigating evidence, even as convincingly as this, is the easy part; obtaining it can be dauntingly difficult work. "You've got to become your client's biographer," George Kendall, a staff attorney with the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, told me. Several speakers at the training session described the painstaking lengths they had gone to in order to gain the trust of a defendant's family, and of the defendant himself: getting his TV fixed, eating jail food with him, talking openly about their own lives.

Carey Haughwout, a private defense attorney from West Palm Beach, described voir dire, the process by which attorneys question potential jurors, as "the most important aspect of the trial." Jurors in a capital case must be "death qualified," which is to say that they must be willing to impose the death penalty, though not in every case. A jury of death-penalty fanatics will be deaf to even the most compelling arguments. A big problem, Haughwout said, is that jurors who don't believe in the death penalty are likely to be more candid about their feelings than those who would impose it all the time. "Those few blessed souls who don't believe in the death penalty need to know that if they can't say they can consider it they won't be on the jury," Haughwout said.

Capital cases are like three-dimensional chess; defense lawyers always have to be thinking about the penalty phase even as they conduct the first, or guilt, phase. "You lose all credibility when you say in trial, 'He didn't do it,' and then in the penalty phase you say, 'Well, he did,' " Haughwout said. If, on the other hand, you use a mental-health defense, she went on, then you can argue, "This is why the person behaved that way." David Bruck said, "You have to make agonizing choices. In cases where your client is actually in danger of being sentenced to death, life without parole is actually a win."

Bruck mentioned the "oppositional" cast of mind that had drawn many of the

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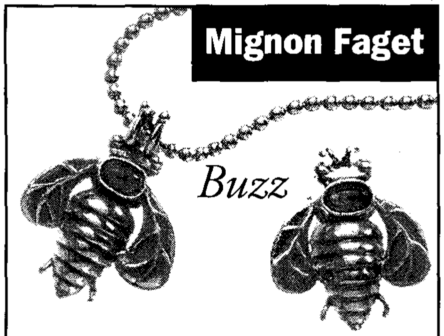

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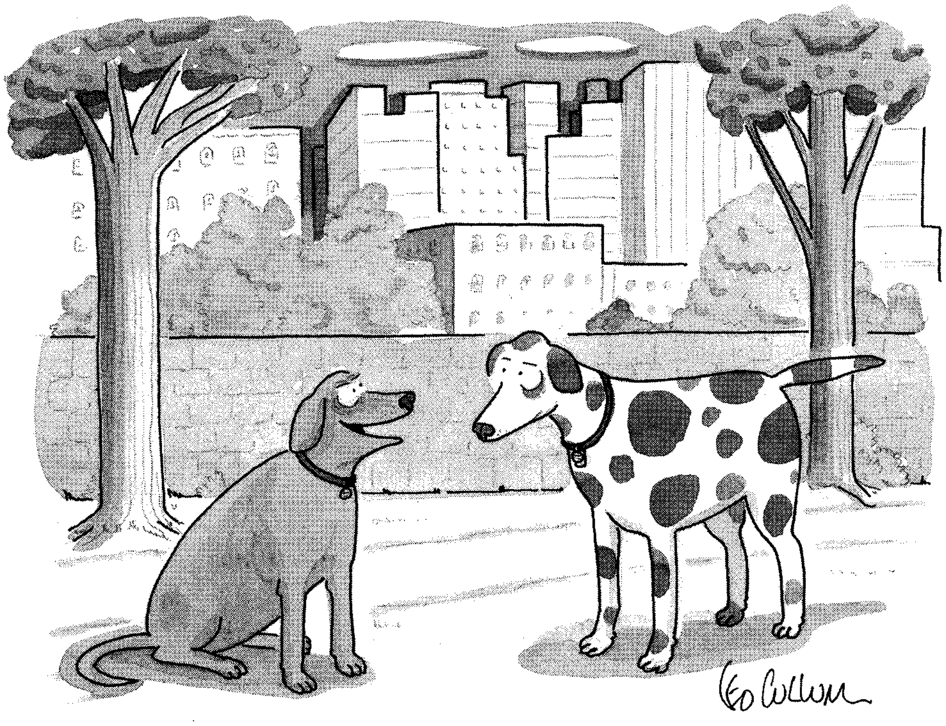


"I bit someone once. It tasted like chicken."

• •

people at the training session to the profession in the first place. It wasn't hard to detect. And yet every once in a while a speaker acknowledged having moments of doubt. Michael O'Connor, a capital-defense attorney in Tempe, Arizona, said that defense attorneys sometimes find themselves identifying with the victim or the victim's family. O'Connor admonished the group, "You have to overcome the revulsion you feel at the crime your client has been accused of." He singled out the sexual abuse and murder of a child, but he did not explain how to throttle the reflex to identify with the victim.

Kevin Doyle delivered a speech that evening. Doyle looks less like a defense attorney than like a prosecutor—and more like a prosecutor than most prosecutors do. He is tall and slender; his carriage is unbendingly erect; and he has cropped, sandy hair whose prow cleaves the air before him. Capital lawyers tend to be a dishevelled lot, as a matter both of economy and of cultural choice. Almost everyone had come to the meeting in sweaters and jeans, but Doyle, whose suits run the gamut from navy blue to navy blue, had come in jacket and tie. His speech was entitled "Lethal Lies We Will Not Tell Ourselves." Lethal Lie No. 8 was "This is serious: I better not piss anyone off." Doyle said, "You should not be lured into a false sense of decorum and civility. You cannot think that you should 'behave'—because, God knows, based on my experience in Alabama, you can't assume that the judge or the prosecutor is going to feel that he should."

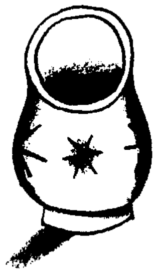
The most striking passage in Doyle's speech was Lethal Lie No. 9: "The jury will come to me." "Most Americans, most citizens of this state define life's ultimate moral questions in religious terms and in terms of virtue and personal moral responsibility," Doyle said. He was speaking from one end of a long cafeteria, yet his booming voice easily reached the most distant attorney. "For those of you who have yet to locate the gift of faith, I am not suggesting you have to return to your church or synagogue. I am suggesting that you cheat your client when you kid yourself about the moral language your jurors speak or refuse to learn it yourself. So go out and study a children's Bible or try to remember what your parents taught you as a kid. But meet the jury in the moral world it occupies."

In late February, Kevin Doyle used his vacation time to try a death-penalty case in Dothan, a county seat in the peanut country of southeastern Alabama. The defendant, a thirty-two-year-old black man named Willie Williams, had been convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death in 1990, but the conviction had been reversed when an appeals court found that the prosecutor, District Attorney Douglas Valeska, had been racially discriminatory in removing a potential juror. Doyle had been working on the case since 1993, and now it was finally coming up for retrial. He was not looking forward to the experience, for Dothan was the kind of place where the phrase "death-qualified jury" was practically a redundancy. Doyle viewed Douglas Valeska as the very incarnation of a hateful system. In an argument before the judge, Doyle called Valeska a racist to his face. But with the jury present he treated the prosecutor with a millimetre-thin veneer of courtesy. The D.A., on the other hand, referred to the defense lawyer only as Doyle—or, rather, "Dawl."

The judge, Denny Holloway, required the potential jurors to fill out a lengthy questionnaire compiled by Doyle. But since he refused to permit Doyle to interview most of them individually, the voir dire consisted primarily of one surprising question: "I'm going to ask each of you who your heroes are," Doyle said. "Billy Graham," the first potential juror replied. "Billy Graham, I guess," the next answered. Then came votes for Charles Colson, Nancy Reagan, Ronald Reagan, Sam Walton, and a flood of additional Billy Grahams. There were ten blacks at the voir dire, and virtually all of them mentioned Martin Luther King, Jr., but Doyle knew that the prosecutor would try to keep as many off the jury as he could. Doyle tried to get the jurors to explain why they admired their selections. He told me later that he wasn't looking for signs of bias—he already knew he was in Billy Graham country—so much as using the idea of the moral exemplar to introduce the principle of moral reasoning, and so to bring the jurors to a higher plane. Besides, he told me, "I have an *excellent* Billy Graham story."

Doyle's opening statement was even more unorthodox. Williams had already confessed to killing a friend named Cheryl Mayo, in 1989. They had been smoking crack together one evening, and Williams had attacked Mayo with a knife, inflicting more than thirty wounds. He had then left, carrying her VCR, as she lay dying in her blood-spattered apartment. Williams, who is about six feet nine and weighs about two hundred and sixty pounds, had claimed self-defense. Doyle tried to recast the killing as "a tragedy" that had been caused by "two reckless individuals" who had plunged into the "chaotic, senseless world of crack cocaine." Cheryl Mayo, he pointed out, weighed two hundred and thirty-six pounds and had a long history of mental illness and of violence. Mayo, he suggested, may have threatened Williams. And then Doyle said that his client nevertheless accepted "full legal and moral responsibility for what he did," and went on, "He asks you—I ask you on his behalf—to return a verdict of guilty of capital murder." The move took nearly everyone, and especially the prosecutor, by surprise: Doyle had just pleaded his client *guilty*.

Doyle had told me beforehand that he was very nervous about this tactic. It was "heretical," he said, to enter a guilty plea without a plea bargain, and it utterly violated his competitive impulses. It was one of those agonizing choices which David Bruck had talked about, and Doyle had made it in the hope of saving his client's life. Despite the self-defense issue, Doyle thought that Williams had virtually no chance in the guilt phase of the trial. The only solution, as he saw it, was to present the guilty plea to the jury as a sign of Williams's contrition and acceptance. Doyle wasn't hopeful, though, particularly since Valeska had succeeded in keeping all but one black from the jury. However, Alabama law deems the jury's verdict advisory, rather than binding, and Doyle reasoned that if he lost with the jury the guilty plea still might persuade Judge Holloway, whom he considered moderate and fair-minded.



Alabama law stipulates that juries must hear the evidence in a capital case even if the defendant pleads guilty. The entire guilt phase took only a day. Valeska put on witnesses who testified graphically about the blood-drenched crime scene, and, over Doyle's objection, he offered in evidence hideous photographs of Mayo's mangled corpse. In his closing, Doyle dwelt at length on Mayo's history of drug and alcohol abuse and of violence and involuntary commitment to mental institutions. Willie Williams's crime had been heinous, but as one listened to Doyle it seemed appalling that Williams was facing the electric chair for an unpremeditated murder that had been arguably committed under the influence of drugs and with at least a plausible element of self-defense. Williams, unlike Mayo, had no prior record of violence.

After the jury found Williams guilty, the state presented its penalty-phase case, which was brief but effective. One of Valeska's assistants read to the jury testimony that Williams had given at his first trial, in which he conceded that Mayo had not died instantly, that as he washed the blood off his hands she was still moving, and that she was groaning as he left her apartment. His callousness made the act seem truly cold-blooded, even if it was unpremeditated. It was up to Doyle to disentangle the man from the crime, and here he faced another serious problem: Williams was not the sort of pathological personality whose family background was rich in abuse and abandonment. Only after Williams started using drugs regularly, in 1987, had he lost his way. Doyle could not argue, as Bruck had in the Susan Smith case, that destiny had propelled the defendant to his act. Instead, he focussed on evidence of Williams's post-conviction behavior. It wasn't a strong suit, but it was the only one he had. He called as a witness Williams's stepmother, Gussie, and she testified that Williams had become a good father to his children. Gussie read heart-wrenching letters that Williams's two remaining children, aged eight and nine, had written to the court; his wife, his mother-in-law, and his eldest daughter had been killed by a drunken truck driver while they were returning from a visit to Williams in jail. Doyle put on two members of a jail ministry who described Williams's gentleness, his kindness toward others, his "inward repentance." A corrections officer said that Williams had been a model prisoner.

At 5 P.M., Doyle rose to address the jury for the last time. Earlier that day, he had delivered his summation in the guilt phase and his opening in the penalty phase, both of them lengthy, tightly structured, and, it appeared, emotionally

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draining. Now he faced the jury and said quietly, "Even though this decision won't affect you, I suggest that it's one of the starkest and most important moral decisions you're ever going to make." Then Doyle turned to a blackboard and on it began listing the mitigating factors: Williams's guilty plea, the possibility of self-defense, the lack of premeditation. He spoke of the "inherent worth" that Williams's wife, Joanne, had seen in him as demonstrated by her visits to him on death row. He recalled the testimony of Williams's conversion.

Doyle turned back to face the jury. He talked about the idea of redemption, and then he segued into his Billy Graham story, which involved a condemned convict in North Carolina named Velma Barfield: "Billy Graham talked about how after her conversion she turned her death-row cell into a powerful pulpit." He spoke of the Biblical story of Paul, who had himself been involved in a murder, and then he invoked the tale of Jesus and the adulteress, the ur-text of the capital summation. "Our Lord intervened," Doyle recalled gravely. "Christ said, 'Go, and sin no more.' " He recalled that the survivors of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King had asked authorities not to seek the death penalty. "Does that mean that they were dishonoring him?" The words were pouring out now; Doyle seemed to be in almost a transfigured state. He told a story about Mother Teresa, who had spoken with a governor on the eve of a planned execution: "Mother Teresa did not try to persuade him as to her views about the death penalty. She didn't talk to him about Scripture. . . . She did one thing. She said, 'Do what Jesus would do.' " Doyle's voice was breaking; he appeared to be exhausted. He opened his mouth, and at first nothing came out. Then he mastered himself, and, in a hoarse whisper, said, "Please, follow the law by the light of your faith and reason and do what Jesus would do." Doyle turned away from the jury, choking back tears.

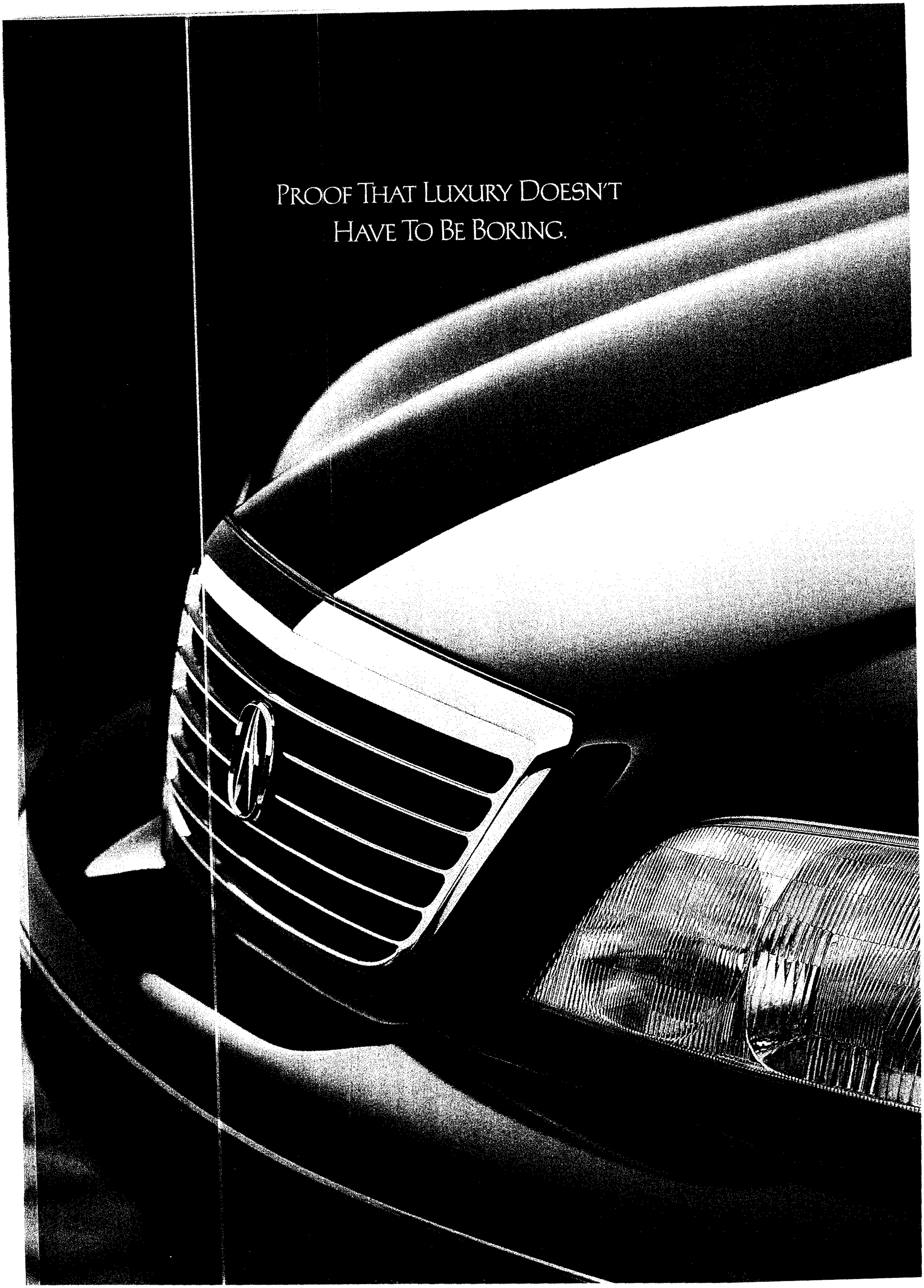
Then Douglas Valeska leaped up and scornfully cried, "Let me give him a *handkerchief!*" Valeska's rebuttal summation was a cascade of ridicule. "I'm no preacher," he told the jury. "I am not going to stand up here and *cry* to you. . . . All he is trying to do is put a guilt trip on you." It was as if Valeska had waited for the final moment to release the full measure of his venom. He reviewed the evidence of Willie Williams's lies, of his adulterous relationship with another woman, and, above all, of the brutality of the crime itself. Valeska shouted that he was not the only one who was asking for the death penalty. "Willie Williams, Jr., himself believes in the death penalty, because he was *judge, jury, executioner* to Cheryl Mayo!"

The jury exited. I had brought a book to idle away the hours until a verdict was reached, but before I had got very far with my reading the word came down: "The jurors are filing in." It seemed impossible; they had been out for only twenty-six minutes. They had to wait while someone went to find Valeska. Then the jurors did file in, and the foreman, Sammy Benson, stood up and said that by a vote of eleven to one the jury had found that Williams should be sentenced to death. (In Alabama, the votes of only ten jurors are required for a recommendation of death.) It wasn't the decision that was shocking so much as the speed. It was as if Doyle had wasted his breath; the jury had already sized Williams up for death. Was it really possible to deliberate the issue of a man's life—to follow the path of moral reasoning—in twenty-six minutes?

Several days after the trial, I telephoned some of the jurors at home. One of them, Thomas McLaney, said that he was "a little tossed up" over Mayo's history of violence, but that he had voted for the death penalty because of "the extent he went to kill her." Another juror, Sandra Lamb, said, "I felt that since he took a life he should have his life taken." The only juror I spoke with who seemed to have seriously reflected on the case was Sammy Benson. It had been, he said, a "gut-wrenching experience." His own feelings were all over the map. When he learned that Mayo was still "suffocating in her own blood" at the time that Williams left, he said, "This nailed him." On the other hand, he said, "Willie Williams was guilty of stupidity. Can I see killing a man for being grossly stupid? No." Benson kept coming back to one idea: "We gave the Judge the leeway to do as he sees fit." Apparently, Benson could not bear the weight of personal responsibility that goes with the death sentence.

Judge Holloway held his sentencing hearing on March 22nd. Doyle presented further mitigating evidence. The Judge listened, and withdrew to his chambers. "That half hour was torturous," Doyle said later. "It was one of those moments when I ask myself, 'How can I *do* this work?' " And then he got the answer: the Judge returned and said that he had decided to sentence Willie Williams to life without parole.

If Governor Pataki does, indeed, want a capital-punishment showdown, he seems to have picked the right case. In Angel Diaz, the alleged cop killer in the Bronx, Doyle has a client who seems to be a far less sympathetic defendant even than Willie Williams. According to press reports, Diaz has a prior conviction for armed robbery, and a prison record that includes assaults against an inmate and a corrections-staff member. When he was arrested for murder, he reportedly said, "Why don't you kill me now? It'll be better than going back to prison." If Dennis Vacco is permitted to remain on the case, the trial is likely to be an epic confrontation between two different agencies of the state, with two profoundly different conceptions of justice. Kevin Doyle likes to say that an absolute punishment requires absolute justice. In an ongoing capital case in Ulster County, attorneys from the C.D.O.'s Albany office have already angered the local prosecutor by filing dozens of pretrial motions, seeking months of extra time, and arguing every issue into the ground. Doyle's office is not about to change its tactics for the Bronx, and Vacco and his staff are not about to accept Doyle's definition of justice. At a recent forum in Albany, George B. Quinlan, who is the head of Vacco's prosecution team, complained that Doyle's office had been intentionally filing "frivolous" and confusing motions in Ulster County, and added that the C.D.O. was showing too much regard for Justice's blindfold and not enough for her sword. It is, of course, Kevin Doyle's job to stand between that sword and its intended victim. If Angel Diaz really wants to die, he has chosen the wrong place to commit murder. ♦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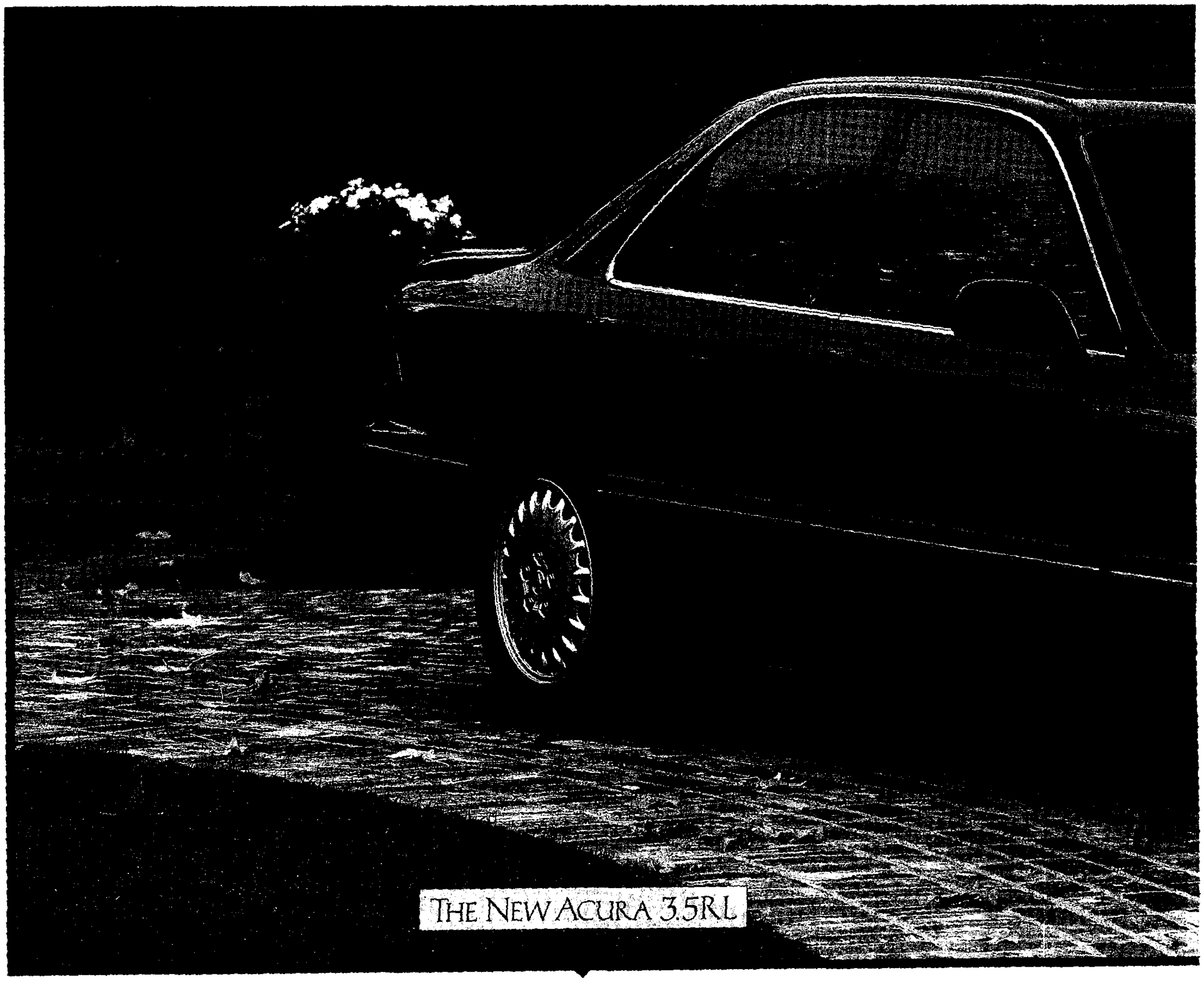

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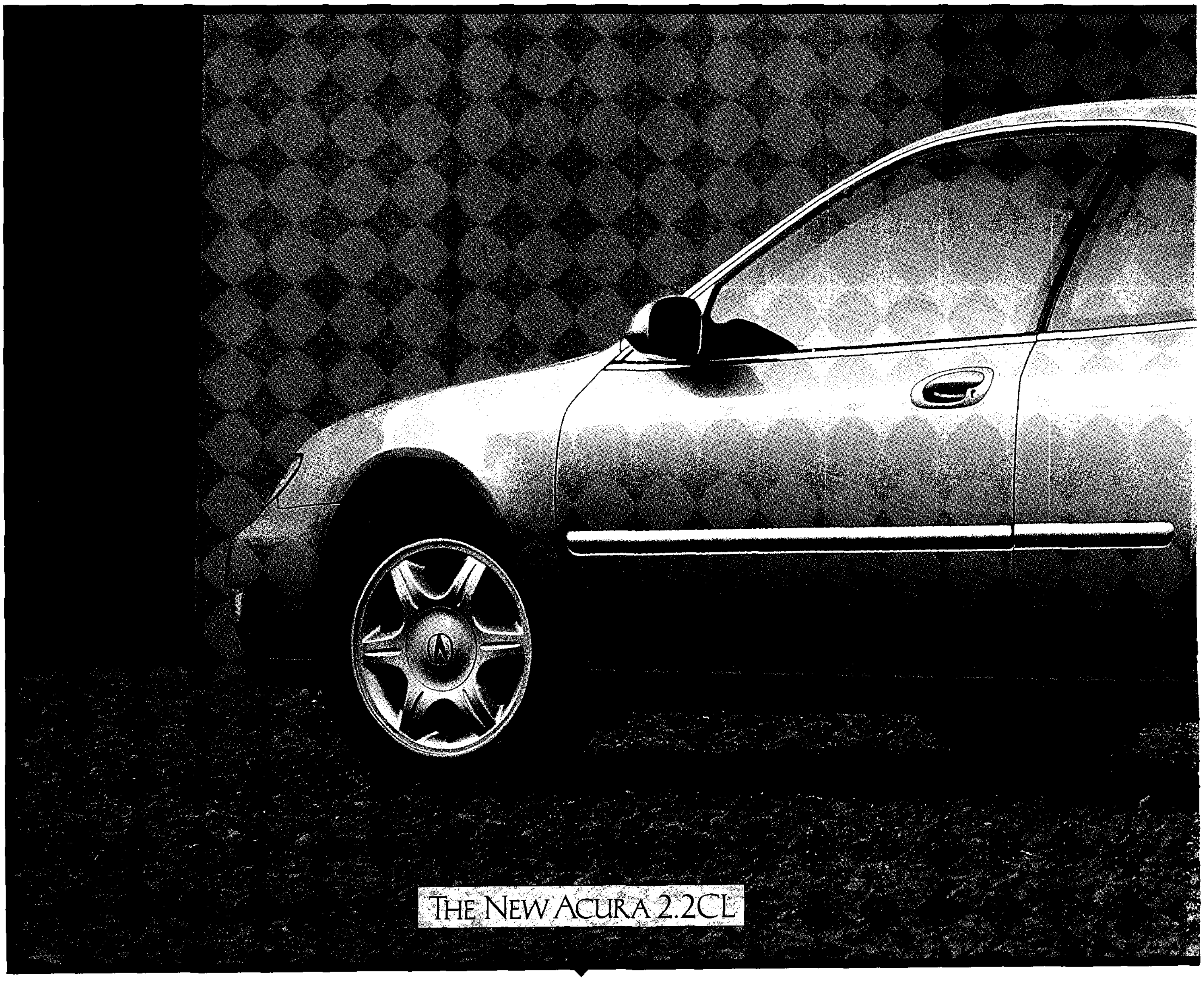

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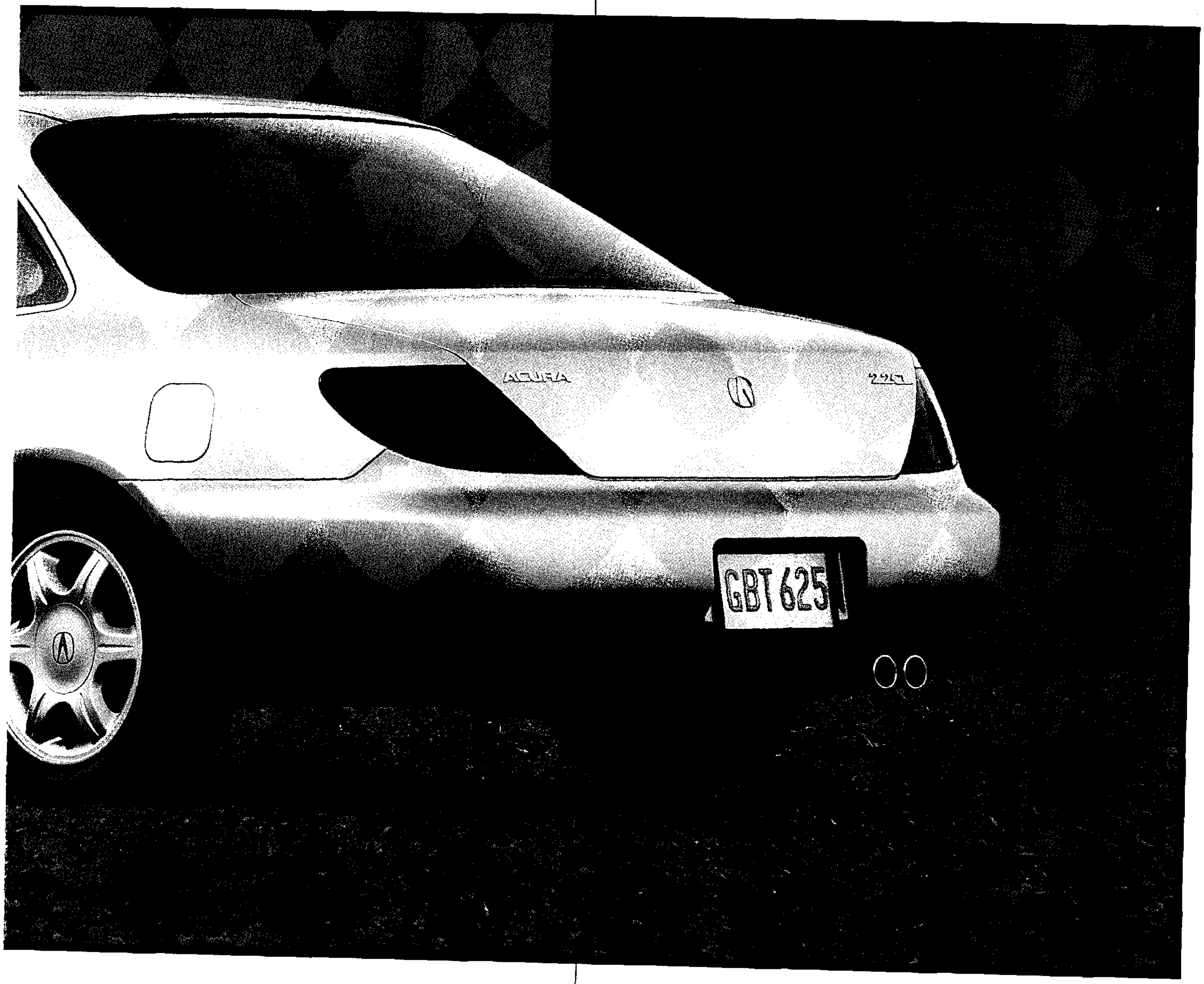
Designed, engineered and built in America, the Acura CL manages to be something that is increasingly rare in the field of luxury sports coupes: an automobile that does not just cut through the wind, it cuts through the clutter.



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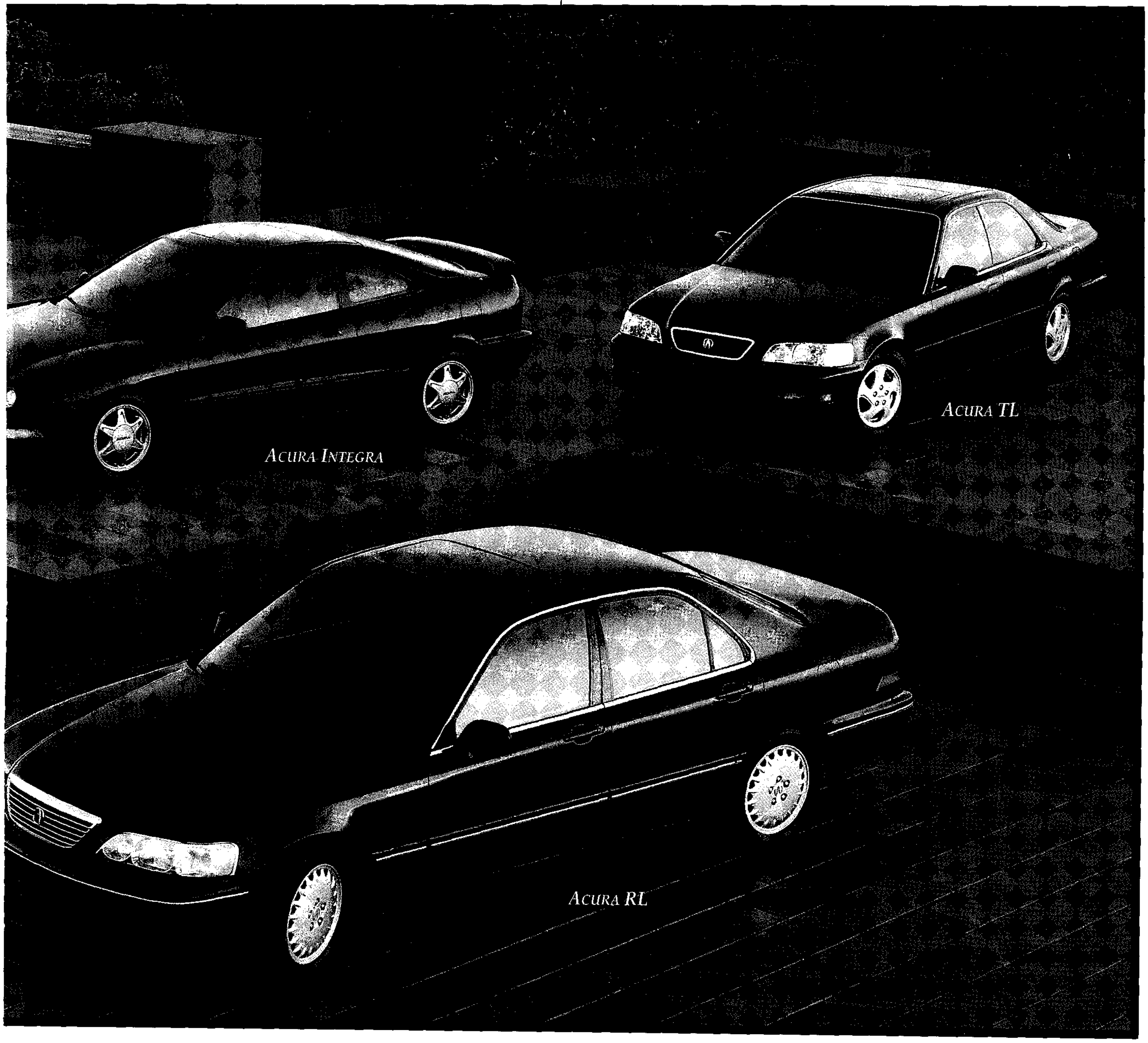

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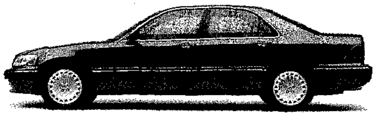

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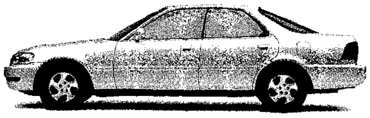
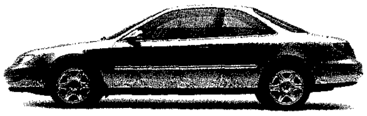


Acura TL Series

The TL Series is the embodiment of touring luxury. The 3.2TL sports luxury sedan comes with a 3.2-liter, 200-horsepower V-6. The 2.5TL sedan is powered by a 2.5-liter, 176-horsepower, inline five-cylinder engine. Both come with leather-appointed‡ interior, power moonroof* and the look of rich wood, in addition to ABS, Automatic Climate Control System, 8-speaker CD sound system and 8-way power driver's seat. The 2.5TL priced from $28,450.† The 3.2TL priced from $32,950.†



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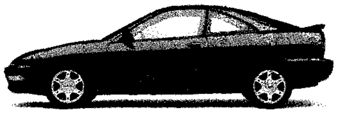
A new member to the Acura family, the Acura 2.2CL luxury sports coupe is the first Acura to be designed, engineered and manufactured in America. It comes standard with a 2.2-liter, 145-horsepower, VTEC engine, Automatic Climate Control System, power windows and door locks, a keyless entry system with integrated theft-deterrent system, a 6-way power driver's seat, a power glass moonroof and an in-dash CD audio system. The 2.2CL priced from $22,110.†



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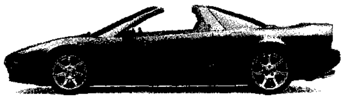

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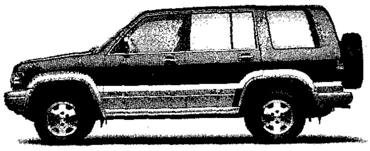


Acura SLX

The Acura SLX is a rugged 4-wheel-drive, sport luxury vehicle, with all the refinement of an Acura. It's the most civilized way to leave civilization. The SLX offers true sport-utility features, like engine power and high-riding visibility. But it also offers such luxury amenities as power windows and door locks, retractable power side mirrors, shift-on-the-fly four-wheel drive, dual air bags, ABS, an Acura Music System, heated leather seats,* wood-grained trim* and a huge safari-sized power moonroof.* The SLX priced from $33,900.†

ACURA

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 1-800-TO-ACURA

**Standard on models with Premium Package. †MSRP excluding destination charges, tax, license, title and options. Dealer price may vary. ‡Standard on 3.2TL base model and models with Premium Package. **Car and Driver, January 1996. ©1996 Acura Division of American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Acura, NSX, RL, SLX, TL, CL and Integra are trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. VTEC is a trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. Total Luxury Care™ is a trademark of Acura. Bose® is a registered trademark of Bose Corporation. Covered by patent rights issued and/or pending. Dolby® is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories. Dynamic Noise Reduction® is a registered trademark of National Semiconductor Corporation. Please Tread Lightly!™ on public and private land. Make an intelligent decision. Buckle up. Printed in U.S.A. 2/96.*

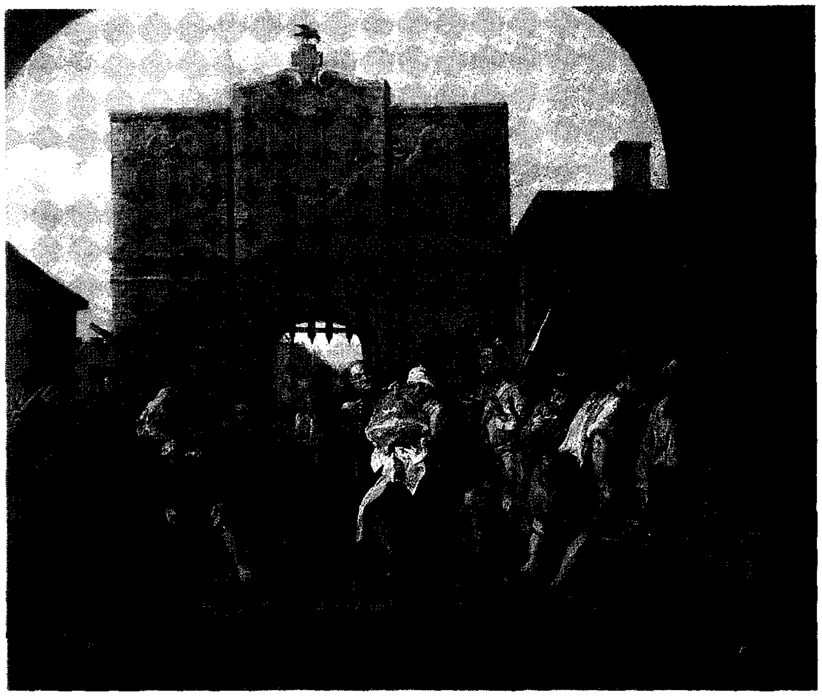
DEPT. OF DISPUTATION

MAD COWS AND ENGLISHMEN

What William Hogarth understood about British beef.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

HAD it up to here with the risotto of the day? Sick of goat cheese and sun-dried-tomato pizza? Well, then, how about Albion's answer to fugu fish: Baked Buttock of British Beef, courtesy of a manuscript recipe of 1765, reproduced in Elisabeth Ayrton's "The Cookery of England"? "Take a thick piece of buttock beef," the recipe instructs, "lay it to soake in a pint of claret wine and a pint of wine vinegar, the beef being first seasoned with peper nutmegg and salt and soe let it lye two days, then take the beef and put it in a pasty well seasoned with nutmeg and salt." Easy as pie, yet the recipe is now a poignant relic of the heroic days of English cattle, when carnivorous gusto was virtually a condition of patriotism. One of England's earliest historians, the Tudor chronicler Holinshed, boasted that "the English cookes, in comparison with other Nations, are most commended for roast meates." Before the invention of stove cooking, in the nineteenth century—an innovation that produced the brownish-grayish overdone joints that were sneered at in American travel guides—an English baron of beef, spit-roasted, scorched with "the taste of fire," and "frothed" with a basting of floury juices, was the envy of Europe. Certainly the quantity of the meat, if not the quality, made an impression. A bill of fare from a mid-seventeenth-century Twelfth Night feast in Essex reveals that *each* of the guests was expected to guzzle his or her way through anywhere from seven to eight pounds of beef, mutton, veal, and other meats.



Hogarth's "The Gate of Calais, or the Roast Beef of Old England."

TATE GALLERY, LONDON/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.

In the ebullient infancy of the British Empire, beef was not just the dinner (and also, to serious gourmands like the Prince Regent, the breakfast) of choice; it was an entire gastronomic constitution, the marrow of political freedom. The motto of a dining club named the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks was "Beef and Liberty," and in Hanoverian London a commonplace

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had it that consuming sirloin supplied freeborn Englishmen with their daily requirement of bloody-minded patriotic virtue. Even the foes of the British Empire believed that it was what it ate: in 1749, the French philosopher La Mettrie attributed the contempt that Englishmen displayed for other nations to an excessive fondness for rare steaks.

Given this ancient assumption that Britannia ruled the waves just as long as her belly was full of beef, no wonder the current plight of the British livestock industry has turned into yet another trauma of national identity. The monarchy may have become soap opera, and the national cricket team a bad joke, but the extinction of the Sunday lunch of Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding has tabloid soothsayers prophesying the death knell of British culture—or, at least, of the Tory Government, which has been accused of procrastination in the face of the impending "beef crisis." The spectre of "mad-cow disease"—an illness that may be contracted by humans, afflicting them with a degenerative brain disorder—has led the European Union to prohibit the import of British beef, and has produced a near-hysteria in England. To those who assume that national passions are artificially manufactured by cynical politicians, all the rage and anguish stirred up in Britain over the European ban will seem overwrought. But the modern British national identity was shaped, in the eighteenth century, around such emotional national icons as the oak and the bull, and defined, invariably, against the French. To have the four-legged symbol of essential Britishness repudiated by the European Union precisely at the moment when discussions are under way on Britain's federal future is to be reminded in the most painful way of the awkwardness of the fit between British insularity and Continental federalism.

What particularly sticks in the patriotic craw is the mortifying spectacle of *le rosbif* being forbidden entry to Continental Europe, for in its glory days the quality of British meat was deeply envied abroad. Advocates of the ungarnished simplicity of the English table—among them Queen Anne's chef, the wonderfully named Patrick Lamb—liked to argue that the reason French cuisine gussied up its fare with complicated sauces was to disguise the dreadful quality of the meat—if, that is, any meat was available. In 1759, a composer named Theodosius Forrest offered a musical-culinary contribution to the war with France by publishing a cantata entitled "The Roast Beef of Old England"; in his libretto he waxed indignant that fashionable chefs in England "have been taught to dress our meat by nations that have no meat to dress."

FORREST'S cantata was inspired by a William Hogarth engraving; the engraving, in turn, was the printed version of "The Gate of Calais, or the Roast Beef of Old England," a painting that Hogarth had completed in 1748. (It is now in the Tate Gallery.) As befits a member of the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, Hogarth has documented more enthusiastically than anyone before or after him the foreign-policy implications of sirloin exports.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in October, 1748, had made it possible for Hogarth and a group of friends to undertake a sketching expedition to France. The return route from Paris took Hogarth through Calais, and while he was waiting for the packet boat he decided to sketch the ancient fortifications of the port, which were built during the two centuries of the city's submission to English rule, and still were emblazoned with the English arms. In the left middle ground of the subsequent painting, the artist is about to be interrupted by an ominous halberd poised above his head, and an apprehending hand has already landed on his right shoulder. To his chagrin, Hogarth was arrested for spying, was interrogated, and was released only when he could prove that he was a mere painter—something he established, the story goes, by making lightning-fast caricatures of his guards. The story also asserted that the unconvinced guards continued their watch even after he had boarded the ferry, and "spun him round like a top on the deck" before finally allowing him to proceed.

The painting and the print were Hogarth's revenge for these humiliations. The scene at the Calais Gate is a tableau of the misfortune of being French: "A farcical pomp of war, parade of riligion and Bustle with very little bussiness," as Hogarth wrote shortly after he returned to England. "In short poverty, slavery and Insolence with an affectation of politeness." And at the center of the scoffing satire is their most pathetic predicament: a salivating greed and desperate hunger that only the all-conquering British sirloin can assuage. Hogarth's side of beef is so mighty that it crooks the knee of a scowling French cook who is carrying it to the Lion d'Argent, the hostelry for English travellers. The entire composition is Hogarth's version of the old genre of Fat and Thin Kitchens, reworked as Gallophobic propaganda. Sweaty relish can be seen shining from the slavering chops of a fat friar. In the left "wing" of what Hogarth seems to have anticipated would be a staged performance lurk leather-faced fishwives cackling over their skate, and on the right there is a miserable Highlander: no Aberdeen Angus, no Braveheart, but, rather, a fugitive from the failed Jacobite rebellion of 1745, reduced to sitting on his bagpipes and contemplating a kettle of *soupe maigre* passing by. The other stock target of English scorn—an Irish mercenary, denoted by his scrawny frame and tattered hose—is spilling his bowl at the sight of the meat. And through the portcullis, beneath the sign of a dove (the Holy Ghost converted into an inn sign), craven subjects of the beefless Bourbon monarch can be glimpsed kneeling before the Host—the only victuals they could expect from the largesse of the Catholic Church and the throne.

The Gate, then, is the threshold of two realms: one officiously policed, servile, superstitious, and starving; the other uninhibited, satirical, and indomitably beefy. Prints of "O the Roast Beef of Old England," as the engraving was called, became a popular source of anti-French propaganda for generations, and the paunchy friar and the starveling sentry were the epitome of the evil from which the bully-beef-fed Royal Navy had spared Britain.

Autres temps, autres mœurs. If Hogarth were around today, would he have to relocate the scene of his satire to a container dock somewhere on the south coast of England, where eleven-year-old kids, desperate for a Big Mac, forlornly await the arrival of Argentine beef, while on a far-off wharf—at, say, Calais—uniformed customs officers mount a round-the-clock vigil against nocturnal landings of unhinged bovines? Perish the thought. ◆

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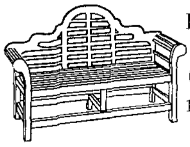

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ANNALS OF RELIGION

BLOOD AND TEARS

Wonders like the weeping Madonna are increasing as the millennium approaches, and presenting a new problem for the Catholic Church.

BY MARINA WARNER

TEARS of blood first appeared in Pantano, Italy, on February 2, 1995, the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin (La Candelora). Fabio Gregori, a state-employed electrician, was putting his two-year-old son, Davide, in the car to go to the evening rosary at Sant' Agostino, his parish church, when his five-year-old daughter, Jessica, called out to him, "Daddy, the Little Madonna is crying!" When Fabio saw bright-red streaks on the statue's face, he touched them and felt "a great blast of fire from head to toe, as if I'd fallen into a brazier." He says he drove to the church "at a hundred and forty kilometres an hour," but he had to wait till the service was over before telling the priest.

Within forty-eight hours, by word of mouth and with help from Radio Maria, relatives and strangers were gathering in the Gregori garden, in Pantano, an outlying district of the busy port of Civitavecchia, about forty miles northwest of Rome on the Tyrrhenian Sea. There were eleven visitors on February 3rd, but the number increased to five times as many on the following day. The Madonnina, a mass-produced white-glazed plaster statue just over sixteen inches high, wept some more—several times, according to fifty-odd witnesses. (The tally varies, with the most enthusiastic believers counting fourteen *lacrimazioni* between February 2nd and March 15th.) Among the people who say they saw the Madonna's bloody tears fall repeatedly during those cold February days were some unexpected ones: a Jehovah's Witness, a photographer from the town, two policemen, the commander of the Vigili Urbani, the traffic police. As the crowds and the tears increased, the parish priest, Don Pablo Martín, decided that it was time to call in his superior—Monsignor Girolamo Grillo, the Bishop of Civitavecchia-Tarquinia.

The Little Madonna of Civitavecchia landed in a custody suit between church and state.

DAVID MCMANUS

Since then, the weeping Madonna has drawn public attention on a scale unusual for this kind of religious event: the media charivari descended—a garish, noisy gang of pundits and scoffers, miracle workers, gossipmongers, television stars, and even a famous healer and exorcist, Emmanuel Milingo, formerly Archbishop of Lusaka, Zambia.

In Civitavecchia, the newly elected mayor, Pietro Tidei, seized the commercial possibilities: he allocated ten million lire for improvements to the church, for benches, water fountains, and portable lavatories. An architect created a model, free of charge, of the future sanctuary, showing it as a huge upturned azure lily, open to the sky. At a press conference, Mayor Tidei spoke of anchoring ferryboats offshore to accommodate pilgrims. Cynics mocked the Mayor's enthusiasm: Tidei belongs to the Partito Democratico della Sinistra—the reconfigured Communist Party—and even if he's not a believer he has retained the crucifix hanging behind the mayoral desk. The citizens of Civitavecchia know that the millennium promises a holy year to cap all holy years, with millions of Catholics making the pilgrimage to Rome. The local correspondent of *Il Messaggero*, Giuseppe Baccarelli, said recently, "Rome is just down the road. If only a fraction of those pilgrims can be attracted to here, just think how many bowls of fish soup that could mean."

As the months went by, however, the optimists—and the opportunists—found that their plans were being frustrated. La Madonnina soon became the stake in a custody suit between church and state, with the state attorney confiscating the statue for examination, and the Bishop defending it as church property.

Enthusiasm for La Madonnina also illuminated a rift in the Catholic Church, between reformers and conservatives. In 1970, Pope Paul VI abolished a clause in canon law which had forbidden publications about visions, miracles, private messages. Soon afterward, accounts of Mary's working presence in the world, through images, statues, and apparitions, began to come thick and fast, and they have continued to do so under the current Pope, John Paul II.

John Paul II has canonized more new saints than any of his predecessors (more than seven hundred men and women have been beatified—the step before canonization—since 1979). When a Turkish terrorist shot him in 1981, his life, he believes, was miraculously spared by Our Lady of Fatima. (The near-fatal bullet is now set in a golden crown the Pope himself placed on the head of the Virgin's statue in Fatima.) It may be surprising that this reserved, ascetic intellectual should constitute the link between traditional popular fervor and a conservative tradition of high moral rectitude, but it appears that Karol Wojtyla has indeed become the presiding genius of both the Christian New Age and the new right.

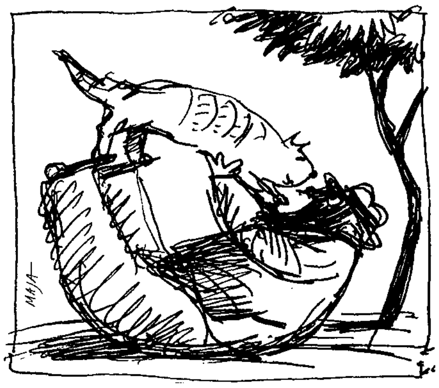
John Cornwell, who has written a perceptive personal account of several Catholic cult sites ("Powers of Darkness, Powers of Light"), says, "The great key to this papacy was exposed during the Lenten Retreat in the Vatican that Wojtyla conducted two years before he became Pope. He stunned the audience with his extraordinary vision of how the world is ever more a burial ground, a vast planet of tombs, a great planet of death. This laid the ground for his whole obsession with the culture of death through abortion and contraception." Many Catholics, and non-Catholics as well, share the Pope's sense of moral and social collapse, and embrace the possibility of apocalypse, with its promise of purgation and rebirth.

The statue in Civitavecchia is hardly the first miraculous Madonna to attract attention. Madonnas often exude perfumed oils and weep, sometimes over a protracted period of time; there are examples, still unexplained, in Ireland, in County Wicklow, and in northern Japan, in a convent in Akita, where a wooden Madonna has been performing since 1973. Abbé René Laurentin, a leading Mariologist, lists in a recent study numerous signs and wonders—including exudations (the technical term for fluxes)—in Belgium, Zaire, Korea, Vietnam, and Rwanda, with the longest entries under Ireland, the United States, and Italy.

As the millennium approaches, the frequency and the variety of such incidents are increasing: The Virgin Mary has appeared in photographs of the sky and on Eucharistic hosts. Her statues have wobbled in front of crowds thousands strong; mystics have received the stigmata, and their own eyes have bled. The phenomena have not quite kept pace with alien abductions and have not spread worldwide as fast as the incidents of milk-drinking by the elephant-headed god Ganesh—a prodigy that was seen within a matter of hours in both Calcutta and Jersey City in September, 1995. But, with advances in telecommunications, the kind of Marian wonders that used to be dismissed as the fancies of a credulous and benighted populace have begun to command interest far beyond the circle of religious believers. Statues of the Virgin Mary also began drinking milk, first in Cheshire, England (nine spoonfuls), then in Kuala Lumpur. The phenomenon of La Madonnina is profoundly connected with this once marginal aspect of religious faith.

The provenance of La Madonnina of Civitavecchia is significant: her journey began in Medjugorje, a small town in the Catholic Croatian part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the diocese of war-torn Mostar. There several children began receiving regular visions of the Madonna in 1981. The visionaries have now grown up, and some have drifted away from the village. Others, however, are still hearing and interpreting messages from the White Lady, who appears to them as they pray at a certain time every day: she exhorts them to pray for the sins of the world in order to avert calamities worse than those which have already befallen. The former Bishop of Mostar struggled to control the ever-growing swarms of pilgrims to Medjugorje and—unavailingly—to quell the Franciscans who were promoting the visions. In spite of his efforts, and even though the visions have not been officially recognized, Medjugorje has become one of the most frequently visited shrines of the Catholic world.

One of the many pilgrims to Medjugorje was the parish priest of Sant' Agostino, Don Pablo Martín. Don Pablo went there in September, 1994, and he bought the plaster Madonnina as a souvenir. Upon his return, he gave the statue to his parishioner and disciple Fabio Gregori, to protect him against the Jehovah's Witnesses, who had been evangelizing in the area. Don Pablo has never expressed any doubt about the authenticity of the miraculous bloody tears on his parishioner's statue, and even today he seems to take it completely for granted. The weeping of the Madonnina, Don Pablo says, forms part of "a mysterious design for the next millennium."



Don Pablo belongs to a community of the mind which encompasses Lourdes, Fatima, and Medjugorje, and other recent miracles and mystics—a community that is defended by self-appointed guardians who have little time for the rationalism and the caution of the official Church. He is what the Italians call a *madonnaro*—a devotee of the Madonna—and is also a valiant defender of the Pope: in his conversation as well as in his sermons, he echoes was perhaps hoping to contain his colleague's religious enthusiasms. If so, this was not the last of Monsignor Grillo's miscalculations.

SOMETIMES, AT NIGHT

In that mute lightless city where I wander,
I see you in the distance.
Your shape is misty but I know your walk.
I know
You're on your way to where we used to live,
Meaning to meet me there.
I hurry after.
Blind-windowed buildings rise and dumbly topple,
Streets twine like coupling snakes,
And somehow I've forgotten our address.

All I can count on
Are kindly daisies nodding by your grave.

—LUCY CORES

Karol Wojtyla's writings, as when he says that Mary is making a pilgrimage in history, marking her path with "epiphanies of maternal assistance to the Church."

Don Pablo, a native of Spain, came to Italy in 1969, when he and some friends in the seminary received a call—a spiritual message—from Padre Pio, a Capuchin friar from the monastery at San Giovanni Rotondo, in Puglia, whose cult has flourished since his death, nearly thirty years ago. After being ordained, Don Pablo and his friends joined a devotional group, the Little Children of the Divine Will, dedicated to another unofficial southern-Italian saint, Luisa Piccarreta—"a truly extraordinary mystic," he told me. Luisa Piccarreta, known as the Little Daughter of the Divine Will, was born in the small town of Corato, near Bari, in 1882, and she died there in 1947. "The Italian people haven't yet realized that they possess such a treasure," Don Pablo said. He described how she survived on nothing but Communion wafers for sixty-five years. "She lived in her bed, and died each day. Each day, in order for her to return to life, a priest had to come—usually one of her five confessors—to give her the order to obey him and return to life." According to Don Pablo, she is "the key to what the Lord is doing here now."

Don Pablo has long been an associate of the Bishop of Civitavecchia-Tarquinia. Monsignor Grillo himself was a known *miracolato,* as the Italians call the beneficiary of a miracle, some time before La Madonnina wept in his territory. Grillo was born in Calabria, and when he was five he was hit in the left eye by a stone while playing with a friend. When the doctor declared that the boy had lost his sight in that eye, his mother, as they left the doctor's, knelt on the steps and begged the Madonna to heal him. When the bandages were taken off, he could see perfectly.

Grillo has a southerner's talent for the telling gesture. He was the Bishop of Cassano all'Ionio from 1979 to 1983, which meant that he also held title to the barony of Mormanno, where the bishop traditionally resided in the summer—and where there was a second bishop's throne. When Grillo could not find the money for a local kindergarten, he suggested that he offer up this throne for auction, causing a furor. He is reported to be "a student of parapsychology and such sciences," and once, when a precious pectoral cross was stolen from him, he is said to have employed a clairvoyant to trace it.

Monsignor Grillo accepted Don Pablo and the Little Children of the Divine Will into his diocese. But the group soon disbanded. Don Pablo is reluctant to discuss the breakup; he simply says, with a touch of drama, "Within that community, I couldn't continue my life, for reasons of conscience." Monsignor Grillo rewarded Don Pablo for his steadfastness with the parish of Pantano, but the small, poor parish was also a kind of limbo where the Bishop was perhaps hoping to contain his colleague's religious enthusiasms. If so, this was not the last of Monsignor Grillo's miscalculations.

The Bishop, whose name and volubility have earned him the sobriquet *il grillo parlante* ("the talking cricket"), could not have known what trials fate—or God's will—was preparing for the diocese of Civitavecchia-Tarquinia when he responded to Don Pablo's call that weekend in February, 1995. He did not go himself, but instead sent a Catholic family doctor he knew to the Gregori home. A diagnostic test showed that the tears were indeed hemoglobin.

At first, the Bishop not only declared himself skeptical but went on to denounce the whole district of Pantano as a hotbed of black magic and Satanist jokers. He also announced the formation of a theological commission to investigate the phenomenon, and then took the statue to his home for safekeeping. After performing an exorcism, he drove it to Rome for analysis in the laboratory of the Pope's own hospital, and two medical experts there tested it and the blood by every means, including a DNA test and a CAT scan.

In the case of La Madonnina of Pantano, the medical experts declared, they were certain that the statue was solid through and through and had not been tampered with. They did, however, spring a surprise: the DNA was male.

THOSE who believed in the miracle argued, on television, that, since Mary should not be worshipped for herself but only as an intercessor, it was appropriate that she should weep male tears—her Son's. But the developments angered enough members of the public to inspire Italy's biggest consumer-protection association, Codacons, to file a formal complaint. Codacons invoked a law, formulated by the Italian government in the thirties, against *abuso della credulità popolare* (abuse of the people's credulity). This attack was followed by another from a highly active crisis line based in Cagliari, Sardinia—the *telefono antiplagio, contro le truffe dei maghi e delle sette* (the anti-brainwashing telephone line, against the tricks of wizards and sects)—sort of spook busters.

Giovanni Panunzio, the founder and director of the crisis line, teaches religion to teen-agers and, as a devout Catholic, is infuriated by the superstitions that he sees turning believers away from the true faith. Through evidence he collects, he struggles to suppress clairvoyants, hypnotists, fortune-tellers, self-styled prophets of public and personal doom, and the peddlers of magic and Satanism who fill the airwaves. They also, Panunzio points out, prey on pilgrims in holy places. "Vulnerable individuals and families can be destroyed by their emotional—and financial—dependence on such mountebanks," he says.

There's an easy trick, he has demonstrated, to making a statue cry: a blood-filled syringe, embedded in plaster and attached to a concealed battery, can be electronically triggered by remote control. He suggested that by the time of the CAT scan the original statue had been switched for another. He also forwarded to the Procura (the district attorney's office) a mysterious fax he had received. Because it was anonymous, it cannot be used as evidence; it may be the work of a crank. But it says, in part, "I feel very deep repentance for Pantano. They told me it was a carnival prank, but instead I am the tool of fanatical colleagues." The note closes with a plea for protection.

A principle exists in the Italian penal code which is not found in the British or American systems: *l'obbligo dell'azione penale,* the obligation to act. Once there has been an accusation, and it has been accepted by the court, the state is obliged to pursue the case to the bitter end. And so, in a perfect example of doing too much, too late, the Procura stepped in. Early in the morning on March 8th, police descended in simultaneous raids on Fabio Gregori's house and the houses of five relatives. Nothing was found—no syringes, vials, telltale paintbrushes, or electronic equipment.

A month later, at the height of the church-state standoff, Monsignor Grillo made the most unexpected revelation of the whole unfolding drama. On April 5th, as if taking a leaf from an evangelist preacher, he made a confession of faith on the television news. He professed that three weeks before, on March 15th, he had lifted La Madonnina out of the basket where she lay in cotton wool, and, as he was looking at her with his sister Grazia, her husband, and two visiting Romanian nuns, he saw the statue weep. His sister touched the tear with her finger, but when she withdrew it the red mark disappeared.

During those intense times, the Bishop said, when the prodigy of Pantano was bringing the world's media onto his patch, he had hoped that the whole matter would just go away, "as so often happens in such cases." He had not been able to sleep, he had been very upset, he had been praying hard night and day for divine direction—for a sign. But now the former skeptic had turned star witness—at his own commission. Not for Grillo the patience and caution recommended by the German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Vatican spokesman on miracles; forgotten were the examples of Medjugorje, still officially in doubt, and of Lourdes, where, in 1858, the local priest harshly repudiated Bernadette, and the Bishop of Tarbes then took four years to accept her visions. Throwing off clerical scruples, Monsignor Grillo had personally endorsed a popular local miracle with unprecedented speed.

The day after the Bishop's sensational disclosure on prime-time news, the state attorney, Antonio Albano, sequestered La Madonnina, sealing her in a cupboard in the Bishop's residence, beyond the reach of everyone; meanwhile, the Italian F.B.I. (the Criminalpol), he announced, would reopen the analysis of the blood samples. Monsignor Grillo cried foul, and once more denounced the work of Satan—now behind the state's maneuvers. He told the press that the revised Concordat of 1984, which defined the relationship between the Italian State and the Vatican, was being violated by this undue and unprecedented interference in a church matter. Fabio Gregori, now formally charged with *abuso della credulità popolare* by Codacons, and with *associazione a delinquere* (conspiracy to commit a crime) by the Procura, nevertheless remained calm. "He is absolutely innocent," his lawyer, Bruno Forestieri, maintains. On April 27th, when the legal request arrived for Fabio, along with five male members of his family, to give blood samples, he announced that he would submit only to the authority of the Bishop's commission.

In the excitement, even those who thought that the family might well be involved in a scam did not want the state's interference. It was just before Easter, and the faithful marched in protest, hundreds strong, through Pantano, to demand the Madonna's liberty and her presence at the holiday ceremonies. But La Madonnina was not released in time for the town's traditional Good Friday procession. In the cathedral of Civitavecchia on Monday of Holy Week, from his wheelchair, the aged Polish Cardinal Andrzej Maria Deskur, a friend and compatriot of the Pope, gave a blessed copy of the Medjugorje statue to the Gregori family to replace the sequestered original, and appeared to convey the Pope's support. He went on to recall, in a prize piece of inflammatory rhetoric, that in 1967 the Communists in Czechoslovakia had confiscated the sacred icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, which hangs in the diocese of Krakow, where Karol Wojtyla was then Archbishop.

Nearly two more quarrelsome months passed, however, before La Madonnina was returned to Pantano. On June 17th, Monsignor Grillo carried the statue back to Sant' Agostino to enshrine her, and then delivered a passionate homily during an open-air Mass.

With no witnesses to see her in her seclusion in the sealed cupboard, she had not wept again; nor did the examinations of the Criminalpol detect any evidence that she had wept at all since February. The Bishop admitted that he "suffered anguish after his experience, that the blood of the Virgin's tears" might have been his own, or a family member's, projected by telekinesis. Soon afterward, Monsignor Grillo began travelling—in America, far from the heated scene of the miracle. In the cathedral, a priest said to me with a sigh, "*Beato lui*" ("Lucky him").

"THE Church is uncomfortable with miracles and such manifestations," John Cornwell, the writer, told me. "Its tendency—though there is some tension over this—is to debunk, and it's not worried about how this affects the faithful. Its view would be that the faithful are much more affected when they become disenchanted." But traditional clerical antagonism to "marvellism," as the Jesuit Carlos María Staehlin has called the popular love of miracles, does not reflect the full picture in the Church today.

William Christian, Jr., in a magisterial recent study, "Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ," writes, "The Church depends on successive layers of creativity. In the constant process of renewal . . . visions, stigmatics, prophets, new devotions, new institutes and new sources of grace in trees, soil, stones, and water make up a kind of ever changing (yet never changing) world. . . . Sacralization is a process."

Some shrines succeed after the inaugural wonder, but others—many others—founder and are forgotten: the process of sacralization is not completed. As the Church itself has become keen on flourishing scientific proofs before the faithful, the establishment of official shrines has become harder. In 1876, for example, three young German girls saw a "woman in white" in a forest, and a local pilgrimage began. But the state authorities moved in, using the criminal police and the Army to drive out visitors and discredit the child seers and the villagers. David Blackbourn has shown in his detailed 1993 book, "Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in a Nineteenth-Century German Village," that the impassioned belief in the visions arose from a widespread sense of collapse among people in an isolated, economically troubled Catholic community on the outer rim of the new, centralized, secular Bismarckian state. But pilgrimage sites, when they catch on, seem to coalesce around a seer, or a group of seers, like the children at Fatima or at Medjugorje, who can persuade the crowds that they are acting as unimpeachable conduits to the divine. This is what the child visionaries of Marpingen crucially failed to do.

In Pantano, a similar drama is being played out. The shrine's future is jeopardized, on the one hand, by detectives looking for plotters and tricksters and, on the other, by spiritual vigilantes exposing false faith and commercial interests. If the object of the crowd's devotion—and curiosity—had been an aubergine in which the name of Allah appeared after it was cut in half (as happened in Leicester, England, in 1990), or an even more patent fabrication, the state would be unlikely to move to protect the public from parting with its common sense or its money. To take a less frivolous example, it would be unthinkable for Canadian authorities to in-

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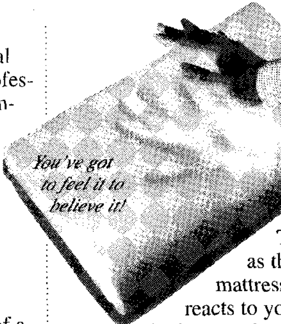

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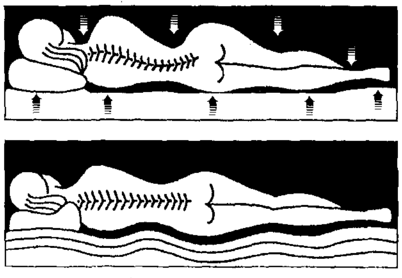

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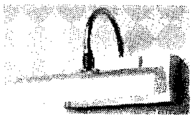

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terfere with a Crow or Blackfoot ancestral ceremony. The belief expressed by the celebrators would be enough to hallow it; the process of sacralization would be under way.

The whodunit approach neglects the needs and dreams behind the miracle of the Virgin's bloody tears—what William Christian calls "the rush of grace in time of upset." The state prosecutor is not investigating the Bishop—or his family, or Don Pablo. "Heaven forbid we should give ourselves even more problems!" the deputy state attorney, Antonio Larosa, said to me. "Remember, it's only a modest crime, which carries a fine, not a prison sentence. But it is inscribed in a much broader perspective, and this we must pursue: blood is appearing on various statues all over Italy, and more frequently. If this tendency grows—whether or not it's the fruit of a conspiracy, which I would not like to say—it is worrying."

Forestieri, the Gregori family's lawyer, expostulates, "It's a nonexistent crime. At first, I was engaged to end the sequestration of the statue—so I have the honor of being the first and only person in the world ever to set the Madonna free. But now it's truly absurd." He also attacks the conduct of the inquiry, in O. J. Simpson-defense style: the first scientists to test the blood were supposed to be present at the Criminalpol's analysis, but on March 28th the analysis went ahead without them. "All guarantees of personal liberty have disappeared," Forestieri says. "Are we to go back to the days of Torquemada? Here the secular arm of the judiciary is behaving like the Inquisition—and this is unacceptable." When the five males of the Gregori family were summoned to court in October, they reiterated Fabio's refusal to submit to a DNA test unless the tests were conducted by church doctors approved by the Bishop.

The street talk and the newspaper theorists spinning the *giallo* (the thriller) propose varying motives: a "macabre joke" could have been played on the fervid piety of Don Pablo and the Gregori family, and could have spiralled out of control when it was taken in earnest; or—in a more sinister interpretation of events—a sect like the Jehovah's Witnesses, wishing to mock the Catholic faith, could have set up the "miracle." Nor has the prosecution dismissed the paranoid theory that a nationwide organization, bent on profiteering, is engineering a series of prodigies to gull the populace.

What seems most likely is that someone streaked the face of the Madonna with blood, once, twice, maybe three times, for motives still unknown, and that the numerous witnesses who then, on different occasions, saw the tears flow suffered a collective hallucination; even a skeptical outsider, caught up in the atmosphere, found it hard to resist the fervor generated by the shrine. The rituals of the rock concert and the Catholic Church alike tap into this effect—this collective, intoxicating rush—as Elias Canetti points out in his great study "Crowds and Power."

In the meantime, the legal process, with all its implications for civil rights and church-state jurisdictions, creeps on; it will be some while yet before a verdict is reached, if any ever is.

In February of 1996, the anniversary of the miracle of Mary's tears, pilgrims from all over Italy were still arriving in buses; they attended daily Masses and held evening vigils and special recitations of the rosary.

During the height of public enthusiasm last summer, Don Pablo held weekday-evening rosary vigils in Sant' Agostino, which began at nine-thirty and lasted nearly two hours. They drew a full house; I saw Fabio Gregori and his wife, Anna Maria Accorsi, arrive and take the front pew, just to the left of the grotto. Anna Maria did not go to pray in front of the Madonnina, but kissed the feet of the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus instead. Fabio, however, knelt in front of the miraculous figurine. He had a rosary wound tightly around his left hand, and jingled the cross hanging from the end as he went up and down the aisle—and continued to do so, restively, in the course of the prayers. Two busloads from Viterbo, in central Italy, were due; when the pilgrims arrived, late, they filed into the church, filling the nave to overflowing; they were carrying candles glowing inside baking-parchment ruffs that protected the flames from the breeze, and they were singing. From the altar, Don Pablo scolded them, in his slightly lisping Castilian-accented speech: "Put out your candles, please. You have no need of candles if your hearts are pure. In fact, they are a danger."

When he knelt at the altar, his head barely showed above it, but his voice whispered, short of breath, swooningly, of the glories and the sufferings of Mary, blazoning her beauty, her love, her power: she was the gentle breeze and the hurricane, the flowering earth and the desert; all the birds and creatures of the world joined in singing her praises.

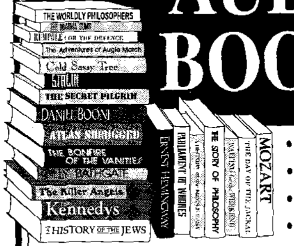
Besides the priest, I could count only six men in the church, which must seat around two hundred. The women seemed a little uneasy at Don Pablo's outpouring: it felt intimate, and they wanted to stay on the comparatively neutral terra firma of the family rosary. Many of the women were brown, crooked, and gnarled, like cruel Renaissance allegories of Vanity. The woman next to me waved the hymn book away cheerfully: "I can't read!" she told me, shaking her head, her mouth opening on empty gums. At the altar, Don Pablo was lifted on the crest of his rapture, and until the current brought him to shore he couldn't stop singing the Madonna's praises. Near the end, he shifted into the first person, speaking as Mary, exhorting his listeners: "You hurt me, because I see you have been very inattentive during my prayers." Later, during the rosary, a plaster statue of Our Lady of Fatima was passed around the congregation; each person, when her turn came to hold it, recited the first versicle of the Hail Mary. A younger woman whispered to me, "It's so beautiful to cradle the Madonna as if she were a baby in your arms! Oh, you must do it."

In the movie "Pulp Fiction," Jules says, "What is significant is I felt the touch of God, God got involved." It's easy to underestimate how deep the longing to touch the sacred can be and to be reciprocally touched by it. In this stifling, packed, pent-up church, one praying woman after another gazed deep into the eyes of a plaster Madonna as if hypnotizing the Madonna to weep.

Yet during the sermon I felt the congregation around me shrink, grow more hunched; the faithful bent their heads lower over their beads. The Virgin's mercy can console, can meet desperate needs, but it can also turn into a flailing: while the media adore a miracle in the same way that they love a scandal, different factions in the Church can annex signs and wonders to their own ends, and pastors like Monsignor Grillo, Abbé Laurentin, Don Pablo, and the Pope himself never stop reminding their flock of doom and despair, sin and punishment. Such wonders as the weeping Virgin are ambiguous: Is the sorrowing Mother crying because of harm done to you, or because of harm you are doing? Do her tears offer you reprieve or reproach? Are you guilty of making her cry? In the miracle of the weeping Virgin, the popular hunger for marvels has combined with the Church's own need in a time of crisis, and it is as if the clergy were projecting their troubles outward, onto the millennium, onto divine revenge for the world's trespasses. The religious imagination has the potential to create paradises, but this is a portent of Hell.

By the end of autumn, with the Madonnina still not authenticated, Don Pablo had transferred his attention back to the "extraordinary mystic" Luisa Piccarreta. He left the parish and its prayers in the care of two other Spanish priests and now lives in San Remo, where, the Bishop's office says, he is free to "work exclusively" on the exaltation of Luisa la Santa.

On Sundays, the Gregori family are still at home to pilgrims in their garden, and they pose for photographs. Fabio eagerly assembles them in front of the cameras: Jessica, now six, looks haggardly into the lens from her father's knee as the group crouches down beside the niche where the new statue stands. Anna Maria and some of the helpers from the shrine, in monogrammed yellow shirts, give the visitors rose petals, a sprig from the bush above the niche, and a picture of Padre Pio. "You are so very fortunate to have this happen to you," a Philippine nun from Rome says wistfully to Anna Maria. Anna Maria looks across to the statue, to the huddle of strangers around her husband and her daughter posed in front of the substitute Madonnina. She inclines her head a little but does not answer. ◆



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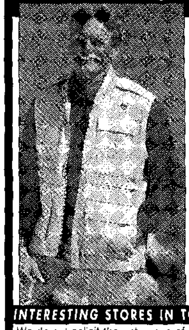

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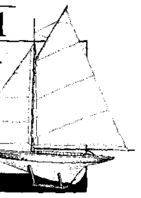

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PROFILE

KING OF CATS

What does it mean to be black? In part, it means rejecting all exclusionary answers to the question, as Albert Murray, the great contrarian of American cultural criticism, has inspired generations of thinkers to do.

BY HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

IN the late seventies, I used to take the train from New Haven to New York on Saturdays, to spend afternoons with Albert Murray at Books & Company, on Madison Avenue. We would roam—often joined by the artist Romare Bearden—through fiction, criticism, philosophy, music. Murray always seemed to wind up fingering densely printed paperbacks by Joyce, Mann, Proust, or Faulkner; Bearden, typically, would pick up a copy of something daunting like Rilke's "Letters on Cézanne" and then insist that I read it on the train home that night.

In those days, Murray was writing Count Basie's autobiography—a project that he didn't finish until 1985. ("For years," he has remarked more than once, "when I wrote the word 'I,' it meant Basie.") But he had already published most of the books that would secure his reputation as a cultural critic—perhaps most notably, his début collection, "The Omni-Americans" (1970), which brought together his ferocious attacks on black separatism, on protest literature, and on what he called "the social science-fiction monster." Commanding as he could be on the page, Murray was an equally impressive figure in the flesh: a lithe and dapper man with an astonishing gift of verbal fluency, by turns grandiloquent and earthy. I loved to listen to his voice—grave but insinuating, with more than a hint of a jazz singer's rasp. Murray had been a schoolmate of the novelist Ralph Ellison at the Tuskegee Institute, and the friendship of the two men over the years seemed a focal point of black literary culture in the ensuing decades. Ellison's one novel, "Invisible Man," was among the few unequivocal masterpieces of American literature in the postwar era, satirizing with equal aplomb Garveyites, Communists, and white racists in both their Southern-agrarian and their Northern-liberal guises. Murray's works of critique and cultural exploration seemed wholly in the same spirit. Both men were militant integrationists, and they shared an almost messianic view of the importance of art. In their ardent belief that Negro culture was a constitutive part of American culture, they had defied an entrenched literary mainstream, which preferred to regard black culture as so much exotica—amusing, perhaps, but eminently dispensable. Now they were also defying a new black vanguard, which regarded authentic black culture as separate from the rest of American culture—something that was created, and could be appreciated, in splendid isolation. While many of their peers liked to speak of wrath and resistance, Murray and Ellison liked to speak of complexity and craft, and for that reason they championed the art of Romare Bearden.

In terms of both critical regard and artistic fecundity, these were good days for Bearden, a large, light-skinned man with a basketball roundness to his head. (I could never get over how much he looked like Nikita Khrushchev.) He, like Murray, was working at the height of his powers—he was completing his famous "Jazz" series of collages—and his stature and influence were greater than those which any other African-American artist had so far enjoyed. The collages combined the visual conventions of black American folk culture with the techniques of modernism—fulfilling what Murray called "the vernacular imperative" to transmute tradition into art.

After a couple of hours at the bookstore, we'd go next door to the Madison Cafe, where Romie, as Murray called him, always ordered the same item: the largest fruit salad that I had ever seen in public. He claimed that he chose the fruit salad because he was watching his weight, but I was convinced that he chose it in order to devour the colors, like an artist dipping his brush into his palette. He'd start laying the ground with the off-white of the apples and the bananas, and follow them with the pinkish orange of the grapefruit, the red of strawberries, the speckled green of kiwifruit; the blueberries and purple grapes he'd save for last. While Romie was consuming his colors, Murray would talk almost non-stop, his marvellous ternary sentences punctuated only by the occasional bite of a B.L.T. or a tuna fish on rye. Murray was then, as now, a man with definite preoccupations, and among the touchstones of his conversation were terms like "discipline" "craft," "tradition," "the aesthetic," and "the Negro idiom." And names like Thomas Mann, André Malraux, Kenneth Burke, and Lord Raglan. There was also another name—a name that never weighed more heavily than when it was unspoken—which sometimes took longer to come up.

"Heard from Ralph lately?" Bearden would almost whisper as the waitress brought the check.

"Still grieving, I guess," Murray would rasp back, shaking his head slowly. He was referring to the fire, about a decade earlier, that had destroyed Ellison's Massachusetts farmhouse and, with it, many months of revisions on his long-awaited second novel. "That fire was a terrible thing." Then Murray, who was so rarely at a loss for words, would fall silent.

Later, when Bearden and I were alone in his Canal Street loft, he'd return to the subject in hushed tones: "Ralph is mad at Al. No one seems to know why. And it's killing Al. He's not sure what he did."

THE rift, or whatever it amounted to, used to vex and puzzle me. It was a great mistake to regard Murray simply as Ellison's sidekick, the way many people did, but he was without question the most fervent and articulate champion of Ellison's art. The two were, in a sense, part of a single project: few figures on the scene shared as many presuppositions and pre-

RICHARD BURBIDGE

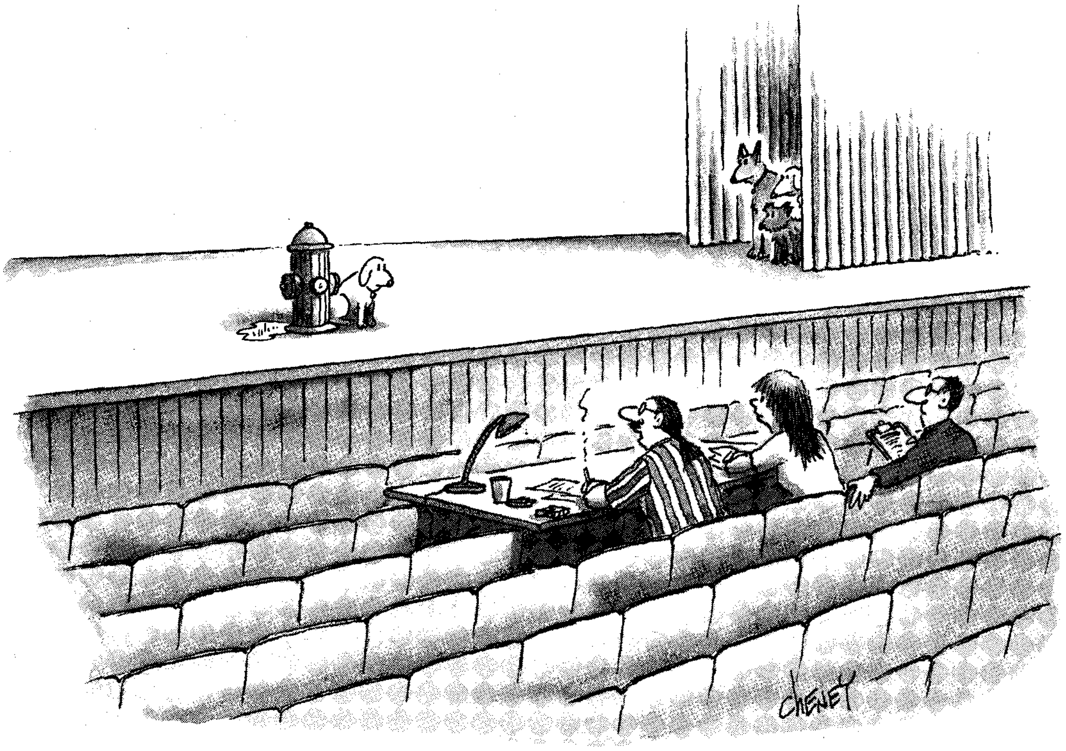
Nobody had to tell Albert Murray about black fire: in him the bullies of blackness had met their most formidable opponent.

occupations as they did. Theirs was a sect far too small for schismatics. At the very least, the rift made things awkward for would-be postulants like me.

When "The Omni-Americans" came out, in 1970, I was in college, majoring in history but pursuing extracurricular studies in how to be black. Those were days when the Black Power movement smoldered, when militancy was the mode and rage de rigueur. Just two years before, the poets Larry Neal and Amiri Baraka had edited "Black Fire," the book that launched the so-called Black Arts movement—in effect, the cultural wing of the Black Power movement. Maybe it was hard to hold a pen with a clenched fist, but you did what you could: the revolution wasn't about niceties of style anyway. On the occasions when Ralph Ellison, an avatar of elegance, was invited to college campuses, blacks invariably denounced him for his failure to involve himself in the civil-rights struggle, for his evident disdain of the posturings of Black Power. For me, though, the era was epitomized by a reading that the poet Nikki Giovanni gave in a university lecture hall, to a standing-room-only crowd—a sea of colorful dashikis and planetary Afros. Her words seemed incandescent with racial rage, and each poem was greeted with a Black Power salute. "Right on! Right on!" we shouted, in the deepest voices we could manage, each time Giovanni made another grand claim about the blackness of blackness. Those were days when violence (or, anyway, talk of violence) had acquired a Fanonist glamour; when the black bourgeoisie—kulaks of color, nothing more—was reviled as an obstacle on the road to revolution; when the arts were seen as merely an instrumentality for a larger cause.

Such was the milieu in which Murray published "The Omni-Americans," and you couldn't imagine a more foolhardy act. This was a book in which the very language of the black nationalists was subjected to a strip search. Ever since Malcolm X, for instance, the epithet "house Negro" had been a staple of militant invective; yet here was Murray arguing that if only we got our history straight we'd realize that those house Negroes were practically race patriots. ("The house slave seems to have brought infinitely more tactical information from the big house to the cabins than any information about subversive plans he ever took back.") And while radicals mocked their bourgeois brethren as "black Anglo-Saxons," Murray defiantly declared, "Not only is it the so-called middle class Negro who challenges the status quo in schools, housing, voting practices, and so on, he is also the one who is most likely to challenge total social structures and value systems." Celebrated chroniclers of black America, including Claude Brown, Gordon Parks, and James Baldwin, were shown by Murray to be tainted by the ethnographic fallacy, the pretense that one writer's peculiar experiences can represent a social genus. "This whole thing about somebody revealing what it is really like to be black has long since gotten out of hand anyway," he wrote. "Does anybody actually believe that, say, Mary McCarthy reveals what it is really like to be a U.S. white woman, or even a Vassar girl?" But he reserved his heaviest artillery for the whole social-science approach to black life, whether in the hands of the psychologist Kenneth Clark (of Brown v. Board of Education fame) or in those of the novelist Richard Wright, who had spent too much time reading his sociologist friends. What was needed wasn't more sociological inquiry, Murray declared; what was needed was cultural creativity, nourished by the folkways and traditions of black America but transcending them. And the work of literature that best met that challenge, he said, was Ellison's "Invisible Man."

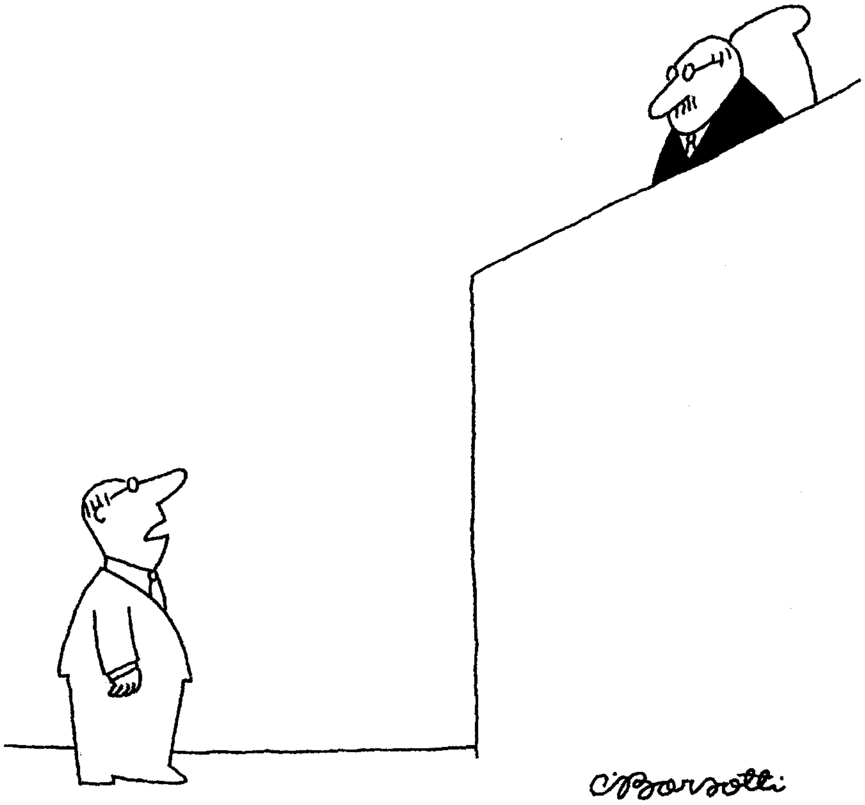
The contrarian held his own simply by matching outrage with outrage—by writing a book that was so pissed-off, jaw-jutting, and unapologetic that it demanded to be taken seriously. Nobody had to tell this veteran about black fire: in Murray the bullies of blackness had met their most formidable opponent. And a great many blacks—who, suborned by "solidarity," had trained themselves to suppress any heretical thoughts—found Murray's book oddly thrilling: it had the transgressive frisson of samizdat under Stalinism. You'd read it greedily, though you just might want to switch dust jackets with "The Wretched of the Earth" before wandering around with it in public. "Very early on, he was saying stuff that could get him killed," the African-American novelist David Bradley says. "And he did not seem to care." The power of his example lingers. "One February, I had just delivered the usual black-history line, and I was beginning to feel that I was selling snake oil," Bradley recalls. "And right here was this man who has



"Thank you, that was very nice. Next!"

said this stuff. And I'm thinking, Well, *he* ain't dead yet."

As if to remove any doubts, Murray has just published two books simultaneously, both with Pantheon. One, "The Seven League Boots," is his third novel, and completes a trilogy about a bright young fellow named Scooter, his fictional alter ego; the other, "The Blue Devils of Nada," is a collection of critical essays, analyzing some favorite artists (Ellington, Hemingway, Bearden) and expatiating upon some favorite tenets (the "blues idiom" as an aesthetic substrate, the essentially fluid nature of American culture). Both are books that will be discussed and debated for years to come; both are vintage Murray.



"My client pleads great wealth."

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THE most outrageous theorist of American culture lives, as he has lived for three decades, in a modest apartment in Lenox Terrace, in Harlem. When I visit him there, everything is pretty much as I remembered it. The public rooms look like yet another Harlem branch of the New York Public Library. Legal pads and magnifying glasses perch beside his two or three favorite chairs, along with numerous ball-point pens, his weapons of choice. His shelves record a lifetime of enthusiasms; James, Tolstoy, Hemingway, Proust, and Faulkner are among the authors most heavily represented. Close at hand are volumes by favored explicants, such as Joseph Campbell, Kenneth Burke, Carl Jung, Rudolph Arnheim, Bruno Bettelheim, Constance Rourke. On his writing desk sits a more intimate canon. There's Thomas Mann's four-volume "Joseph and his Brothers"—the saga, after all, of a slave who gains the power to decide the fate of a people. There's André Malraux's "Man's Fate," which represented for Ellison and Murray a more rarefied mode of engagé writing than anything their compeers had to offer. There's Joel Chandler Harris's "The Complete Tales of Uncle Remus," a mother lode of African-American folklore. One wall is filled with his famously compendious collection of jazz recordings; a matte-black CD-player was a gift from his protégé Wynton Marsalis. You will not, however, see the sort of framed awards that festooned Ellison's apartment. "I have received few of those honors," he says, pulling on his arthritic right leg. "No American Academy, few honorary degrees."

A quarter of a century has passed since Murray's literary début, and time has mellowed him not at all. His arthritis may have worsened over the past few years, and there is always an aluminum walker close by, but as he talks he sprouts wings. Murray likes to elaborate on his points and elaborate on his elaborations, until you find that you have circumnavigated the globe and raced through the whole of post-Homeric literary history—and this is what he calls "vamping till ready." In his conversation, outrages alternate with insights, and often the insights are the outrages. Every literary culture has its superego and its id; Albert Murray has the odd distinction of being both. The contradictions of human nature are, fittingly, a favorite topic of Murray's. He talks about how Thomas Jefferson was a slaveholder but how he also helped to establish a country whose founding creed was liberty. "Every time I think about it," he says, "I want to wake him up and give him ten more slaves." He's less indulgent of the conflicting impulses of Malcolm X. Dr. King's strategy of nonviolence was "one of the most magnificent things that anybody ever invented in the civil-rights movement," he maintains. "And this guy came up and started thumbing his nose at it, and, to my utter amazement, he's treated as if he were a civil-rights leader. He didn't lead anything. He was in Selma laughing at these guys. God *damn*, nigger!"

Albert Murray is a teacher by temperament, and as he explains a point he'll often say that he wants to be sure to "work it into your consciousness." The twentieth century has worked a great deal into Murray's consciousness. He was fifteen when the Scottsboro trial began, twenty-two when Marian Anderson sang at the Lincoln Memorial. He joined the Air Force when it was segregated and rejoined shortly after it had been desegregated. He was in his late thirties when Brown v. Board of Education was decided, when the conflict in Korea was concluded, when Rosa Parks was arrested. He was in his forties when the Civil Rights Act was passed, when S.N.C.C. was founded, when John F. Kennedy was killed. And he was in his fifties when the Black Panther Party was formed, when King was shot, when Black Power was proclaimed. Such are the lineaments of public history—the sort of grainy national drama that newsreels used to record. For him, though, the figures of history are as vivid as drinking companions, and, on the whole, no more sacrosanct.

He is equally unabashed about taking on contemporary figures of veneration, even in the presence of a venerator. Thus, about the novelist Toni Morrison, we agree to disagree. "I do think it's tainted with do-goodism," he says of her Nobel Prize, rejecting what he considers the special pleading of contemporary feminism. "I think it's redressing wrongs. You don't have to condescend to no goddam Jane Austen. Or the Brontës, or George Eliot and George Sand. These chicks are tough. You think you'll get your fastball by Jane Austen? So we don't need special pleading for anything. And the same goes for blackness." He bridles at the phenomenon of Terry McMillan, the best-selling author of "Waiting to Exhale"—or, more precisely, at the nature of the attention she has received. "I think it's a mistake to try to read some profound political significance into everything, like as soon as a Negro writes it's got to be some civil-rights thing," he says. "It's just Jackie Collins stuff."

At times, his pans somehow edge into panegyrics, the result being what might be called a backhanded insult. About Maya Angelou's much discussed Inaugural poem he says, "It's like the reaction to 'Porgy and Bess.' Man, you put a bunch of brown-skinned people onstage, with footlights and curtains, and they make *anything* work. White people have no resistance to Negro performers: they charm the pants off anything. Black people make you listen up. They're singing 'Old Man River'—'Tote that barge, lift that bale'? What the fuck is that? Everybody responded like 'This is great.' That type of fantastic charm means that black performers can redeem almost any type of pop fare."

Since discipline and craft are his bywords, however, he distrusts staged spontaneity. "He plays the same note that he perfected twenty-five years ago, and he acts like he's got to sweat to get the note out of the goddam guitar," Murray says of the contemporary blues musician B. B. King. "He's got to shake his head and frown, and it's just going to be the same goddam note he already played twenty-five years ago." Murray himself doesn't mind returning to notes he played twenty-five years ago—his nonfiction books explore the same set of issues, and can be read as chapters of a single ongoing opus.

IN LATE FEBRUARY

As when the siege of some great city lifts

and they sit outside on steps drinking hot tea
and making mindless chatter, I hear my daughter
after two months of snow and a sudden thaw—
feeling sun heat the hair at the back of her neck—
say the word "grass" over and over, seeing a strip
of pale green the robins are already mining.

Driving to work last Sunday, I thought the soul
might be a handful of blown snow, its scattered
shattered light vanishing before my eyes.
And yesterday, from a maple branch, I could taste
the barest trace of sweetness, encased
in a blade of ice where the branch had fractured.

Every night now, under the blazing stars
and over the ice cracking like toffee brittle,
a dog barks all night like my mind, keeping
the entire neighborhood awake. But when
I meet the barefoot boy in the colored waistcoat
walking home past midnight in a cloud of song,

I know the old season's almost over,
and I almost love my own shadow again—
its attached levity making light of obstacles
and accelerating over known ground like
a catbird lost in the deep leaves of summer
but for its persistent, *Pursue me!* music.

—Eamon Grennan

Indeed, from all accounts the fashioning of this particular cultural hero began long before the start of his writing career.

In Murray's case, heroism was a matter both of circumstance and of will. Certainly he has long been an avid student of the subject. Lord Raglan's classic "The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama" (1936) is among the books most frequently cited in his writing, and it remains a part of his personal canon. Moreover, the mythic patterns that Lord Raglan parsed turn out to have had resonances for Murray beyond the strictly literary. According to Raglan's exhaustively researched generalizations, the hero is highborn, but "the circumstances of his conception are unusual," and he is "spirited away" to be "reared by foster-parents in a far country." Then, "on reaching manhood," he "returns or goes to his future kingdom," confronts and defeats the king, or a dragon, or some such, and starts being heroic in earnest. So it was, more or less, with Oedipus, Theseus, Romulus, Joseph, Moses, Siegfried, Arthur, Robin Hood, and—oh, yes—Albert Murray.

Murray was born in 1916 and grew up in Magazine Point, a hamlet not far from Mobile, Alabama. His mother was a housewife, and his father, Murray says, was a "common laborer," who sometimes helped lay railroad tracks as a cross-tie cutter and at other times harvested timber in the Turpentine woods. "As far as the Murrays were concerned, it was a fantastic thing that I finished the ninth grade," he recalls, "or that I could read the newspaper." But he had already decided that he was bound for college. Everyone in the village knew that there was something special about him. And he knew it, too.

He had known it ever since an all-night wake—he was around eleven at the time—when he had fallen asleep in the living room, his head cradled in his mother's lap. At one point, he surfaced to hear himself being discussed, but, with a child's cunning, he pretended he was still asleep.

"Tell me something," a relative was saying. "Is it true that Miss Graham is really his mama?"

"She's the one brought him into the world," Mrs. Murray replied. "But I'm his mama. She gave him to me when he was no bigger than a minute, and he was so little I had to put him on a pillow to take him home. I didn't think he was going to make it. I laid him out for God to take him two or three times. And I said, 'Lord, this child is here for something, so I'm going to feed this child and he's going to make it.' " It was a moment that Al Murray likens to finding out the truth about Santa Claus.

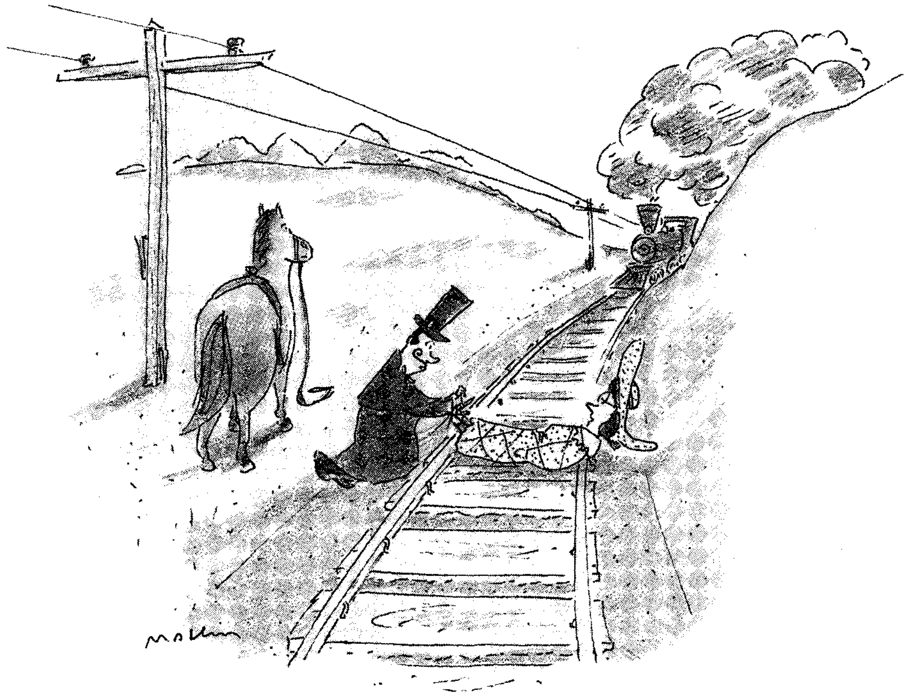
Murray's birth parents were, as he slowly learned, well educated and securely middle class—people who belonged to an entirely different social stratum from that of his adoptive parents. His natural father, John Young, came from a well-established family in town. His natural mother had been attending Tuskegee as a boarding student and working part time for John Young's aunt and uncle, who were in the real-estate business. When she learned that a close encounter with John Young had left her pregnant, she had to leave town—"because of the disgrace," Murray explains. As luck would have it, a cousin of hers knew a married woman who, unable to bear a child of her own, was interested in adopting one. Murray doesn't have to be prodded to make the fairy-tale connection. "It's just like the prince left among the paupers," he says cheerfully. (In "The Omni-Americans" he wrote, apropos of the 1965 Moynihan report on the breakdown of the black-family structure, "How many epic heroes issue from conventional families?")

As a freshman at the Tuskegee Institute—the ancestral kingdom he was fated to enter—Murray became aware of a junior whose reading habits were alarmingly similar to his. He was a music major from Oklahoma named Ralph Waldo Ellison, and what first impressed Murray about him was his wardrobe. "Joe College, right out of *Esquire*—he had fine contrasting slacks, gray tweed jacket. He would be wearing bow ties and two-tone shoes," Murray recalls. "In those days, when you checked out a book from the library you had a little slip in the back where you would write your name, and then they would stamp the due date." Consequently, when Murray took out a book by, say, T. S. Eliot or Robinson Jeffers, he could see who had previously borrowed the book. Time and again, it was that music major with the two-tone shoes.

Ellison left Tuskegee for New York before completing his senior year: his absence was meant to be temporary, a means of saving some money, but he never went back. Murray earned his B.A. at Tuskegee in 1939, and stayed on to teach. In 1941, he married Mozelle Menefee, who was a student there. He spent the last two years of the Second World War on active duty in the Air Force. "I was just hoping I'd live long enough for Thomas Mann to finish the last volume of 'Joseph and His Brothers,' " he says. Two years after his discharge, he moved to New York, where, on the G.I. bill, he got a master's degree in literature from New York University. It was also in New York that the friendship between him and Ellison took off. Ellison read passages to Murray from a manuscript that would turn into "Invisible Man." The two men explored the streets and the sounds of Harlem together; over meals and over drinks, they hashed out ideas about improvisation, the blues, and literary modernism. Even then, Murray had a reputation as a "great explainer."

The prominent black religious and literary scholar Nathan A. Scott, who was a graduate student in New York in the forties and had become a friend of Ellison's, tells about being in the Gotham Book Mart one day and noticing another black man there. "I was somewhat surprised to find this slight, dark man there, because I'd never bumped into a Negro there," Scott recounts. "And some young white chap came in, and they knew each other and immediately plunged into a spirited conversation, and at a certain point I overheard this chap say to the black man, 'Well, what are you working on these days?' To which the black chap replied, 'Oh, I am doing an essay in self-definition.' " (And Scott laughs loudly.) Later, at a dinner at Ellison's apartment, Ellison introduced Scott to his friend Albert Murray: "Immediately, I thought, By God, here is the chap who was doing that essay in self-definition! Inwardly, I laughed all over again."

If it was clear that the young man was interested in trying to write, it wasn't so clear what the results were. In the early fifties, Saul Bellow and Ralph Ellison shared a house in Dutchess County, and Bellow recalls seeing Murray from time to time down in the city. "I think he agreed with Ralph, in simply assuming that they were deeply installed in the whole American picture," Bellow says. He adds that Ellison talked about Murray's writing in those days, but that he himself never saw any of it. In 1952, Ellison published "Invisible



"I sense a great deal of hostility coming from you."

Man." The book was a best-seller for several months, and garnered some of the most enthusiastic critical responses anyone could remember. It was soon a classroom staple, the subject of books and dissertations. It was read and reread. Ellison, in short, had become an immortal. And Murray? With a wife and a daughter to support, he was pursuing a more conventional career—in the Air Force, which he rejoined in 1951.

As a military officer, Murray taught courses in geopolitics in the Air Force R.O.T.C. program at Tuskegee, where he was based for much of the fifties, and he oversaw the administration of large-scale technical operations both in North Africa and in the United States. While his military career has remained oddly isolated from his creative work—a matter of regret, in the opinion of some of his friends—the experience would leave him impatient with the pretensions of the by-any-means-necessary brigade. He says, in that distinctively Murrayesque tone of zestful exasperation, "Let's talk about 'the fire next time.' You know damn well they can put out the fire by Wednesday."

When Murray retired from the military, in 1962, he moved to New York, and soon his articles began to appear in periodicals (*Life*, *The New Leader*) and collections ("Anger, and Beyond"). In 1964, Ellison wrote a letter about his old friend to one Jacob Cohen, who was planning to start a magazine. "Actually I find it very difficult to write about him," the letter began. "I suppose because I have known him since our days at Tuskegee, and because our contacts since that time have been so constant and our assumptions about so many matters in such close agreement that I really don't have the proper sense of perspective." Ellison went on to say of Murray, "He has the imagination which allows him to project himself into the centers of power, and he uses his imagination to deal with serious problems seriously and as though he were a responsible participant in the affairs of our nation and our time." The following year, a panel of book critics, authors, and editors found "Invisible Man" to be the most widely admired novel published since the Second World War. Meanwhile, Albert Murray, then two years out of the Air Force, was scarcely known outside the circle of his acquaintances.

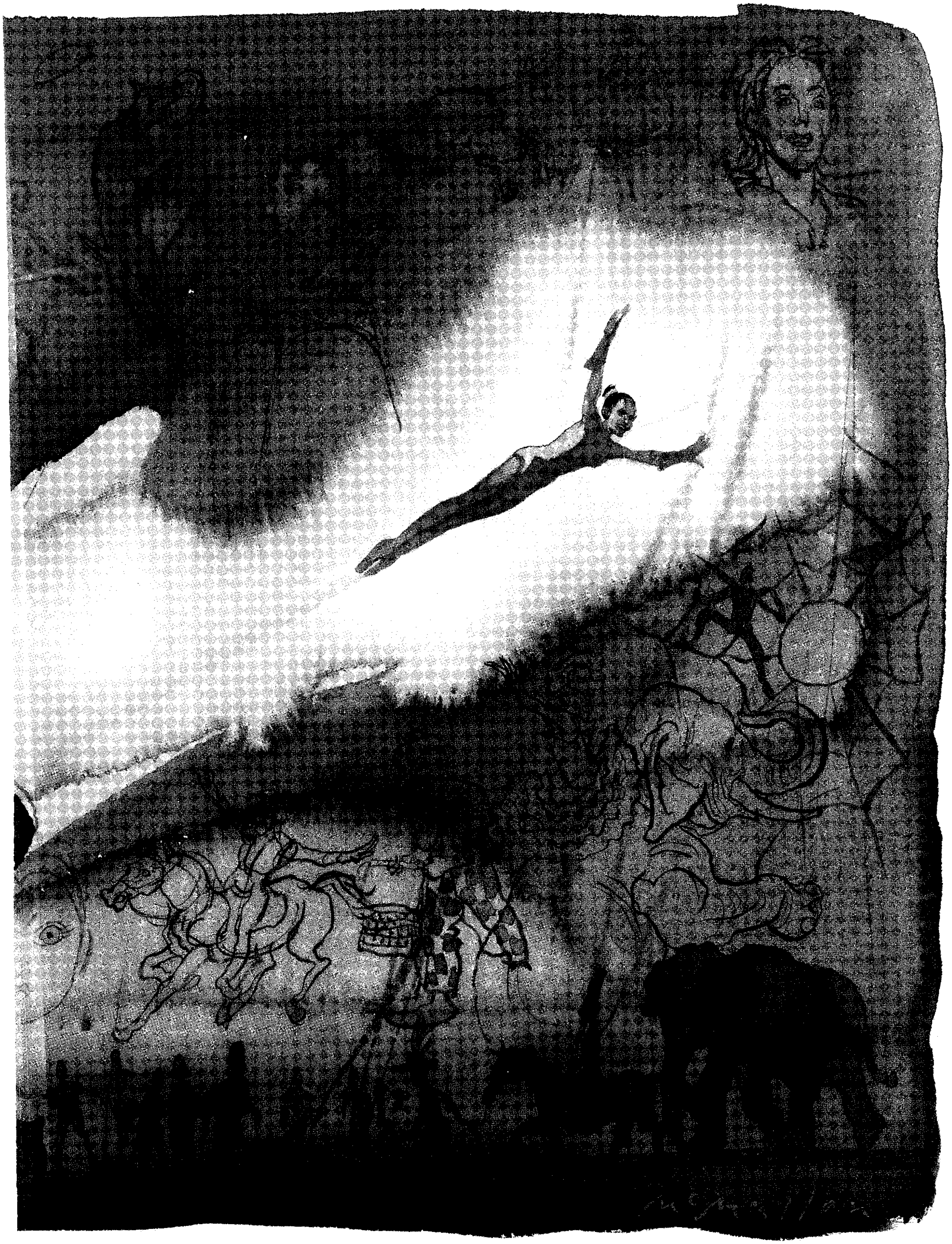
However asymmetric the public stature of the pair, people who spent time with Murray and Ellison in those days were impressed by the ease and intimacy of their friendship. In the late sixties, Willie Morris, then the editor of *Harper's*, eagerly sought their company: they provided him with a refreshing contrast to what he found a suffocating literary climate. He recalls, "In every way, they were like brothers—you know, soul brothers and fellow-writers—but Ellison's star was so bright, and Al was just really getting started." Soul brothers they may have been; they were also brothers-in-arms. When Murray rose to do battle with the rising ranks of black nationalism, he knew he shared a foxhole with Ralph Ellison, and there must have been comfort in that.

It may seem ironic that the person who first urged "The Omni-Americans" on me was Larry Neal, one of the Black Arts founders. But Neal was a man of far greater subtlety than the movement he spawned, and he understood Albert Murray's larger enterprise—the one that he shared with Ellison—better than most. People who may not read Murray but like the *idea* of him reflexively label him an "integrationist"; seldom do they take in the term's full complexity. In Murray's hands, integration wasn't an act of accommodation but an act of introjection. Indeed, at the heart of Murray and Ellison's joint enterprise was perhaps the most breathtaking act of cultural chutzpah this land had witnessed since Columbus blithely claimed it all for Isabella.

In its bluntest form, their assertion was that the truest Americans were black Americans. For much of what was truly distinctive about America's "national character" was rooted in the improvisatory prehistory of the blues. The very sound of American English "is derived from the timbre of the African voice and the listening habits of the African ear," Ellison maintained. "If there is such a thing as a Yale accent, there is a Negro wail in it." This is the lesson that the protagonist of Ellison's novel learns while working at a paint factory: the whitest white is made by adding a drop of black. For generations, the word "American" had tacitly connoted "white." Murray inverted the cultural assumptions and the verbal conventions: in his discourse, "American," roughly speaking, means "black." So, even as the clenched-fist crowd was scrambling for cultural crumbs, Murray was declaring the entire harvest board of American civ-

Shot from a thirty-foot crossbow, Airic

ARTIST AT LARGE · BY JAMES McMULLAN



Human Arrow, soars across Madison Square Garden in the grand finale of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

"Tightening the buttocks."

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ilization to be his birthright. In a sense, Murray was the ultimate black nationalist. And the fact that people so easily mistook his vision for its opposite proved how radical it was.

But why stop with matters American? What did the European savants of Existentialism understand about *la condition humaine* that Ma Rainey did not? In later works, most notably "Stomping the Blues" (1976), Murray took the blues to places undreamed-of by its originators. It has long been a commonplace that the achievements of black music have far outstripped those of black literature—that no black writer has produced work of an aesthetic complexity comparable to Duke Ellington's, Count Basie's, or Charlie Parker's. This much, for Murray, was a point of departure: he sought to process the blues into a self-conscious aesthetic, to translate the deep structure of the black vernacular into prose. Arguably, LeRoi Jones attempted something similar in his celebrated "Blues People" (1963), but there sociology gained the upper hand over art. (Ellison, writing in *The New York Review of Books*, complained that Jones's approach was enough to "give even the blues the blues.") To Murray, the blues stood in opposition to all such reductionism. "What it all represents is an attitude toward the nature of human experience (and the alternatives of human adjustment) that is both elemental and comprehensive," he wrote in "Stomping the Blues," and he continued:

> It is a statement about confronting the complexities inherent in the human situation and about improvising or experimenting or riffing or otherwise playing with (or even gambling with) such possibilities as are also inherent in the obstacles, the disjunctures, and the jeopardy. It is also a statement about perseverance and about resilience and thus also about the maintenance of equilibrium despite precarious circumstances and about achieving elegance in the very process of coping with the rudiments of subsistence.

Though Murray's salvific conception of the blues may seem fantastical, it represented precisely the alternative that Larry Neal and others were searching for. In truth, you could no more capture the sublimity of music in earthbound prose than you could trap the moon's silvery reflection in a barrel of rainwater, but there was heroism, surely, in the effort.

Nor was it only literature that could be revivified by jazz and the blues. That was where Bearden came in, and that was why his friendship with Murray had to be understood also as an artistic alliance. Bearden's mixed-media works could serve as a cultural paradigm for the kind of bricolage and hybridity that Murray favored.

In recent stanzas entitled "Omni-Albert Murray" the young African-American poet Elizabeth Alexander writes, "In my mind and in his I think a painting is a poem / A tambourine's a hip shake and train whistle a guitar." Certainly Murray proved an authoritative exponent of Bearden's works, the titles of which were frequently of his devising. The literary scholar Robert O'Meally remembers being with Bearden and Murray in Books & Company when the two were trying to decide on a name for whatever picture Bearden had brought along that day. O'Meally recalls, "It might be that Al Murray's eye was caught by the figure of a woman in one corner of the image. And he'd say, 'Who's that?' And Bearden would be looking embarrassed, because the woman in question had been an old girlfriend of his. Maybe Bearden would say, 'Oh, she's just a woman I once knew from North Carolina.' And then Murray would say, 'I've got it. Let's call it "Red-Headed Woman from North Carolina."' Or, 'I know, call it "Red-Headed Woman from North Carolina with Rooster."' And Bearden would go and write that on the back of his painting."

Murray stood ready to assist in other ways, too. When, in 1978, I asked Bearden if he would conduct a seminar on Afro-American art at Yale, where I was teaching, his immediate response was "Why don't you ask Al?" But this particular appointment called for an artist, and Bearden finally did accept, though with genuine reluctance and vehement protestations of pedagogic incompetence. So reluctant was he that I was astonished by the remarkably well-organized and cogent weekly lectures he had prepared—always neatly double-spaced and fifty minutes in duration, the precise length of the academic lecturer's hour. Comprehension soon dawned. Bearden, taking matters into his own hands, had found a way to bring Murray along to New Haven: the critic had ghostwritten Professor Bearden's erudite lectures.

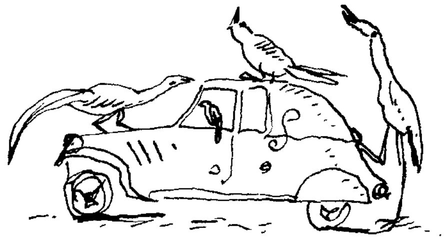
BUT did Murray have debts of his own to acknowledge—in particular, to his Tuskegee schoolmate? The very similarity of their preoccupations proved a source of friction. Now it was Murray—here, there, and everywhere—spreading the glad word about the literary theorist Kenneth Burke, about Lord Raglan, about the luminous blending of craft and metaphysics represented by André Malraux and by Thomas Mann. Ellison's claim, at least to Kenneth Burke and Lord Raglan, seems clear: they were part of the swirl of ideas at Bennington College in the early fifties, when Ellison was living nearby and socializing with the faculty. One writer who had been friendly with both Murray and Ellison since the forties assures me that he has no doubt as to who was the exegete and who the originator: "This is not to say that Al was simply some sort of epigone. But *all* the fundamental ideas that are part of 'The Omni-Americans' came from Ellison. Al made his own music out of those ideas, but *I* know where they came from. The course of thought that Murray began to follow in the sixties was a result of Ralph's influence, I think there is no doubt about this at all."

That has become something of a consensus view. In a recent appreciation of Murray, the jazz critic Gene Seymour writes that on such subjects as improvisation, discipline, and tradition Murray (and, by extension, disciples of his like Stanley Crouch and Wynton Marsalis) sounds "like an echo." He maintains that the recently published volume of Ellison's collected essays "makes clear [that] Ellison was the wellspring for the ideals advanced by Murray, Crouch, and Marsalis."

It's a thorny subject. At one point, Murray tells me about V. S. Naipaul's visit with him in the late eighties—a visit that was recorded in Naipaul's "A Turn in the South." Naipaul wrote, "He was a man of enthusiasms, easy to be with, easy to listen to. His life seemed to have been a series of happy discoveries." At the same time, Naipaul identified Murray as a writer who "was, or had been, a protégé of Ralph Ellison's." Murray makes it clear that this gloss does not sit well with him. He counters by quoting something that Robert Bone, a pioneering scholar of African-American literature, told him: "I've been trying to figure out *who* is the protégé of *whom.*"

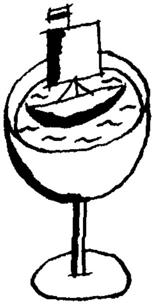
Bone, an acquaintance of both principals, suggests beginning with a different set of premises. "On Murray's part, it must have been a terribly difficult thing for him to have been overshadowed by Ralph in terms of the timing of their two careers," he says. "In a way, they started out together at Tuskegee, and then they cemented that friendship in New York, but Murray got such a later start in his career as a writer. So when he came on the scene Ralph was, of course, a celebrity." What escapes us, Bone says, is that many of the positions with which Ellison was associated were ones the two had mulled over together and corresponded about—especially "the link between Afro-American writing and Afro-American music." Reverse all your assumptions, though, and one thing remains constant: "Murray, I think, naturally must have felt a good deal of envy and resentment." Where others see Darwin and Huxley, Bone sees Watson and Crick. Of Ellison and Murray he says, "There was a time when they were both young and aspiring writers, and they shared these ideas and they worked on them together, but Ralph got into print with them first, by a kind of accident." Speaking like a true literary historian, he adds, "I think these matters will be resolved when Murray leaves his papers—he has a box full of correspondence with Ellison. I think that that correspondence is going to bring out the mutuality of these explorations and discoveries."

IT'S clear that, beneath Ellison's unfailingly courtly demeanor, his own internal struggles may have taken their toll. The fire, in the fall of 1967, is often mentioned as a watershed moment for him, one whose symbolic freight would only increase over the years. He had been busy that summer in his Massachusetts farmhouse, making extensive revisions on his novel in progress—Murray recalls seeing a manuscript thick with interlinear emendations during a visit there. At times, Ellison had called Murray to read him some of the new material. The fire occurred on the very evening that the Ellisons had decided to return to New York. Murray says, "He packed up all his stuff and got everything together, put it all in the hallway leading out, with some of his cameras and some of his shooting equipment. Then they went out to dinner with Richard Wilbur. On the way home, when they got to a certain point, they saw this fire reflection on the skyline, and, the nearer they got, the more it seemed like it was their place. And as they turned in, they saw their house going up in flames." Ellison had a copy of the manuscript in New York, but the rewriting and rethinking that had occupied him for months were lost. "So he went into shock, really. He just closed off from everybody." Murray didn't hear from him until Christmas. In the months that followed, Ellison would sometimes call Murray up and read him passages—trying to jog Murray's memory so that he would jog Ellison's. "It took him years to recover," Murray says. Meanwhile, Murray's career was following an opposite trajectory. As if making up for lost time, he spent the first half of the seventies averaging a book a year; during the same period, Ellison's block as a novelist had grown to mythic proportions. Bellow says, "Ralph was suffering very deeply from his hangup, and it was very hard to have any connection with him. He got into a very strange state, I think."



Did Ellison feel betrayed? It seems clear that he did. ("Romie used to call it 'Oklahoma paranoia,' " Murray says, musing on the froideur that settled between them.) Did Ellison have reason to? That's harder to answer. The African-American poet Michael S. Harper, an Ellison stalwart, says, "The most important word I ever heard Ralph say was the word 'honor.' I happen to know some of the difficulties they went through when Albert was in a phase of making appearances in white literary salons, and reports came back from various people." Theories of the estrangement abound. One writer acquainted with the two men says that Ellison had learned that Murray was bad-mouthing him; another suggests that Ellison simply felt crowded, that Murray was presenting himself as Ellison's confidant—"as the man to see if you want to know"—in a way that Ellison found unseemly. The chill could make things awkward for acquaintances. One of them says, "I remember on one occasion Ralph and I were lunching at the Century Club, when Al saw me in the downstairs lobby. He came up immediately and we chatted briefly, and as we were talking to each other Ralph walked away and would have nothing to do with Al. Theirs had become a difficult relationship."

Murray, for his part, is inclined to see the matter in almost anthropological terms, as falling into the behavior patterns of out-group representatives amid an in-group: "Here's a guy who figures that he's got *his* white folks over here, and he got them all hoodwinked, so he don't want anybody coming in messing things up." In anthropological terms, the native informant never relishes competition. "Hell, it was probably inevitable," Willie Morris says of the estrangement.



For all their similarities in background, education, sensibility, even dress (they shared a tailor, Charlie Davidson, himself something of a legend in sartorial circles), the two men inclined toward rather contrasting styles of public presentation. A private man who in later years grew intensely aware of being a public figure, Ellison had contrived a persona designed to defeat white expectations of black brutishness. Hence the same words come up again and again when people try to write about him—words like "patrician," "formal," "aristocratic," "mandarin," "civilized," "dignified." James Baldwin once observed, shrewdly, that Ellison was "as angry as anybody can be and still *live*." It was this banked anger that kept his back so straight in public settings, his manners so impeccable; even his spoken sentences wore spats and suspenders. Murray, who enjoyed verbal sparring as much as anybody, lacked that gift of anger, and as a conversationalist he had always taken delight in the saltier idioms of the street. (Imagine Redd Foxx with a graduate degree in literature.) The writer Reynolds Price, a friend of both Ellison and Murray, says, "Ralph had a kind of saturnine, slightly bemused quality. I thought Al always seemed the more buoyant person."

Writing is at once a solitary and a sociable act, and literary relationships are similarly compounded of opposites. So it was with Ellison and Murray, two country cousins. Many people speak of Ellison's eightieth-birthday party—to which Murray had been invited and at which he delivered a moving tribute to his old schoolmate—as a significant moment of reconciliation. "I think it was Ellison's way of reaching out to Murray," a friend of Ellison's says.

Then, too, for all his companionability, Murray's literary inclinations ran strongly toward the paternal. He takes deep satisfaction in that role, and there are many who can attest to his capacity for nurturance. James Alan McPherson, one of the fiction writers who have most often been likened to Ellison, recalls a time in the late seventies when he was in Rhode Island with Michael Harper, the poet, and Ernest J. Gaines, whose novels include "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman." In a moment of mad enthusiasm, they hit on the idea of going to New York and letting Ellison know how much they admired him. When they phoned him, he told them, to their unbounded joy, that they should come right down. And so, after an almost mythic trek, these young black writers arrived at Riverside Drive to pay a visit to their hero.

"Mr. Ellison can't see you," they were told at the door. "He's busy working."

They were crushed. They were also adrift: with the destination of their pilgrimage closed to them, they had no place to go. "So we called Al Murray, and he picked up the slack," McPherson recounts. "He brought us to his apartment, where he had some apples and some bourbon and some fancy French cheese. And he said, 'Have you ever met Duke Ellington's sister?' We said no, so he took us over to meet Duke Ellington's sister. And he said, 'Do you want to see the Bearden retrospective?' " He took them to the Brooklyn Museum and on to the Cordier and Ekstrom gallery, where Bearden was then showing his work. "And I'll always remember Al for that," McPherson says. (Murray tells me, "Most guys forget that I'm just two years younger than Ralph, but they feel closer to me because I'm more accessible. They kid with me all the time.") Perhaps, in the end, Ellison was the better student of Lord Raglan: he knew that patricide, or some variant of it, was a staple of heroic literature. McPherson says, quietly, "Ellison didn't want any sons."

For McPherson, what crystallized things was a ceremony that City College held in 1984 to honor Ellison. McPherson and Harper were both there to give tributes. At the luncheon, Harper tapped on his glass and handed Ellison a wrapped box, saying, "Ralph, here's a gift from your sons."

"Then you'd better open it yourself," Ellison replied dryly. "I'm afraid it might explode."

Albert Murray has now reached the age where his progeny have progeny, two of the most prominent in his line being, of course, Stanley Crouch and Wynton Marsalis. Both are frequent guests at Lenox Terrace, and Marsalis tells me of dinner-table conversations that roam from Homer to Galileo, from the commedia dell'arte to Faulkner and Neruda. "Murray has given me a first-class education," he says. And he speaks eloquently about the impact that "Stomping the Blues," and Murray's very notion of jazz as an art form, had on him; he speaks about tradition, blues idioms, a poetics of inclusion. As he puts it, "I'm a Murrayite." Crouch, whose writing has brilliantly championed Murray's difficult aesthetic and emulated his pugnacious style of critique, says, "I think he's one of the foremost thinkers to appear in American letters over the last twenty-five years." (He also suggests that Murray would have been a far worthier candidate for a Nobel Prize than Toni Morrison.) "The last of the giants," McPherson calls him.

There is much to be said for having descendants. They spread the insights you have given them. They worry about why you are not better known. (Crouch has a simple explanation for Murray's relative obscurity: "It's because he spent all that time on the Basie book—there was that very long silence. I think what happened was that his career lost momentum.") They remind you, fetchingly, of your own callow youth. And they take inspiration from your fearless style of analysis and critique, and apply it to your own work—though this can be a mixed blessing.

No doubt it's the ultimate tribute to Murray's legacy of combative candor that his most fervid admirers are quite free in expressing their critical reservations—notably with regard to the new novel. "The Seven League Boots" has the distinction of being the least autobiographical of Murray's three novels: its protagonist leaves Alabama with his bass and joins up with a legendary jazz band—one not unlike Ellington's. The band is blissfully free of quarrels and petty jealousies, and Murray's alter ego, Scooter, inspires only affection in those he encounters. Indeed, this is, in no small part, a novel about friendships, about literary and intellectual conversations and correspondences, including those between Scooter and his old college roommate. On a trip across the Mississippi River Bridge, Scooter finds himself thinking about

> my old roommate again. But this time the writer he brought to mind was not Rilke but Walt Whitman, about whom he had said in response to my letter about joining the band for a while. . . . *According to my old roommate, old Walt Whitman, barnstorming troubadour par excellence that he was, could only have been completely delighted with the interplay of aesthetic and pragmatic considerations evidenced in the maps and mileage charts and always tentative itineraries. . . .* It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who spoke of "melodies that ascend and leap and pierce into the deeps of infinite time," my roommate also wrote, which, by the way, would make a very fine blurb for a Louis Armstrong solo such as the one on "Potato Head Blues."

In the next few pages, there are allusions to, among others, Melville, James Joyce, Van Wyck Brooks, Lewis Mumford, Constance Rourke, Frederick Douglass, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Antonin Dvorák. Perhaps the critic's library overstocks his novelistic imagination. In the *Times Book Review*, the novelist and critic Charles Johnson—who must be counted among Murray's heirs, and is certainly among his most heartfelt admirers—described it as "a novel without tension." It may well be that the pleasures this novel affords are more discursive than dramatic, more essayistic than narrative. Murray tells me, "I write hoping that the most sophisticated readers of my time will think that I'm worth reading." They do, and he is.

THE poet Elizabeth Alexander writes:

> Albert Murray do they call you Al
> or Bert or Murray or "Tuskegee Boy"?
> Who are the Omni-Ones who help
> me feel?
> I'm born after so much. Nostalgia
> hurts.

You could say of him what he said of Gordon Parks: "Sometimes it is as if he himself doesn't quite know what to make of what he has in fact *already* made of himself." Sometimes I don't quite, either. On the one hand, I cherish the vernacular; on the other, I've always distrusted the notion of "myth" as something deliberately added to literature, like the prize in a box of Cracker Jack. And though my first two books can be read as footnotes to "The Omni-Americans," I, like most in the demoralized profession of literary studies, have less faith in the cultural power of criticism than he has. All the same, I find his company immensely cheering.

We live in an age of irony—an age when passionate intensity is hard to find outside a freshman dining hall, and when even the mediocre lack all conviction. But Murray was produced by another age, in which intelligence expressed itself in ardor. He has spent a career *believing* in things, like the gospel according to Ma Rainey and Jimmy Rushing and Duke Ellington. More broadly, he believes in the sublimity of art, and he has never been afraid of risking bathos to get to it. (I think the reason he took so long to write Basie's life story is that he wanted to step *inside* a great black artist, to see for himself how improvisation and formal complexity could produce high art.)

The last time I visited him at his apartment, I sat in the chair next to his writing desk as he talked me through the years of his life and his formation, and made clear much that had been unclear to me about cultural modernity. "Let me begin by saying that Romie frequently got me into trouble," Ralph Ellison told mourners at a 1988 memorial service for Bearden. "Nothing physical, mind you, but difficulties arising out of our attempts to make some practical sense of the relationship between art and living, between ideas and the complex details of consciousness and experience." In this sense, Murray, too, has always spelled trouble—for critics and artists of every description, for icon-breakers and icon-makers, for friends and foes. You learn a great many things when you sit with him in his apartment, but, summed up, they amount to a larger vision: this is Albert Murray's century; we just live in it. ♦

Bernard Schoenbaum

"Young lady, don't get gutsy with me."

PERSONAL HISTORY

HOW I BECAME A SINGLE WOMAN

Scenes from a life of passion and solitude.

BY ALISON ROSE

MY ROOM ALONE, WITH ANIMALS

IN my room, on Sixty-eighth Street off Madison, there's the same oval mirror that I looked in when I was growing up in California. It's fake French. The ceiling is high, and two huge sets of windows on one side of the room are made up of small rectangles of pastel-colored glass. The walls are painted pink, and the ceiling is white—the room looks like a cake. A man I had a lot of sex with there, a doleful rock-and-roll icon with the prettiest mouth (his music is still upsettingly on the radio all the time), told me that the room looked like New Orleans. I have a refectory table with three lamps on it and also a blue typewriter. A big quilt given to me in 1970 by a man I knew hangs above the table. There's a green wicker chair with chintz cushions; my cat, Toast, sits on it. The head of my bed is pushed against the middle of one wall; on one side of the bed, there's a round table with photographs of the cat and of my dog, Puppy Jane, on it. I used to have a little collection of photographs of men—a set of boyfriends I had once—on that table, but I took them off and stashed them in a drawer, after some deliberation.

The table on the other side of my bed has a blue vase on it with dried peonies all shoved together, and my dark-red hymnal from the Annie Wright Seminary, and a navy-blue Book of Common Prayer that my ex-friend James (not his real name) gave me when we were friends. There's a footstool from my childhood room, and parquet floors that I like, and a big old rug the colors of the windows. On the floor, leaning against the wall, is a photograph of me from 1977. A few weeks ago, a man I have a thing about these days—I forced him to come into my room for just a minute to look around—saw it and said, "You look noble." I do.

Inside one of my closets are seven shopping bags full of pieces of paper with sacred things written on them by men I've known, and then two boxes of drafts of the letters I wrote to them, neatly tied up with good-looking string. The other closet has mostly black clothes in it. There are tapes and CDs all over the floor by the bed and, in frames on different walls, four drawings by Harold, the king of all my old boyfriends; a gold paper star that James, who was my absolute favorite, gave me one Christmas; and a drawing by another man of Puppy Jane attempting to fly too close to the sun. In one of Harold's drawings, there's a very small bird flying toward a birdhouse in a tree. The title he gave it is "Wow! A Happy Ending!" Another drawing of his, of my face, has a typewritten comment from him on it:

> There should be a Bureau of Metropolitan Longing to explain to you why your life doesn't mean more than it does and why you don't have a lover who is your equal in devotion and the ability to do his work.

A SINGLE DISASTER IN THE RAIN

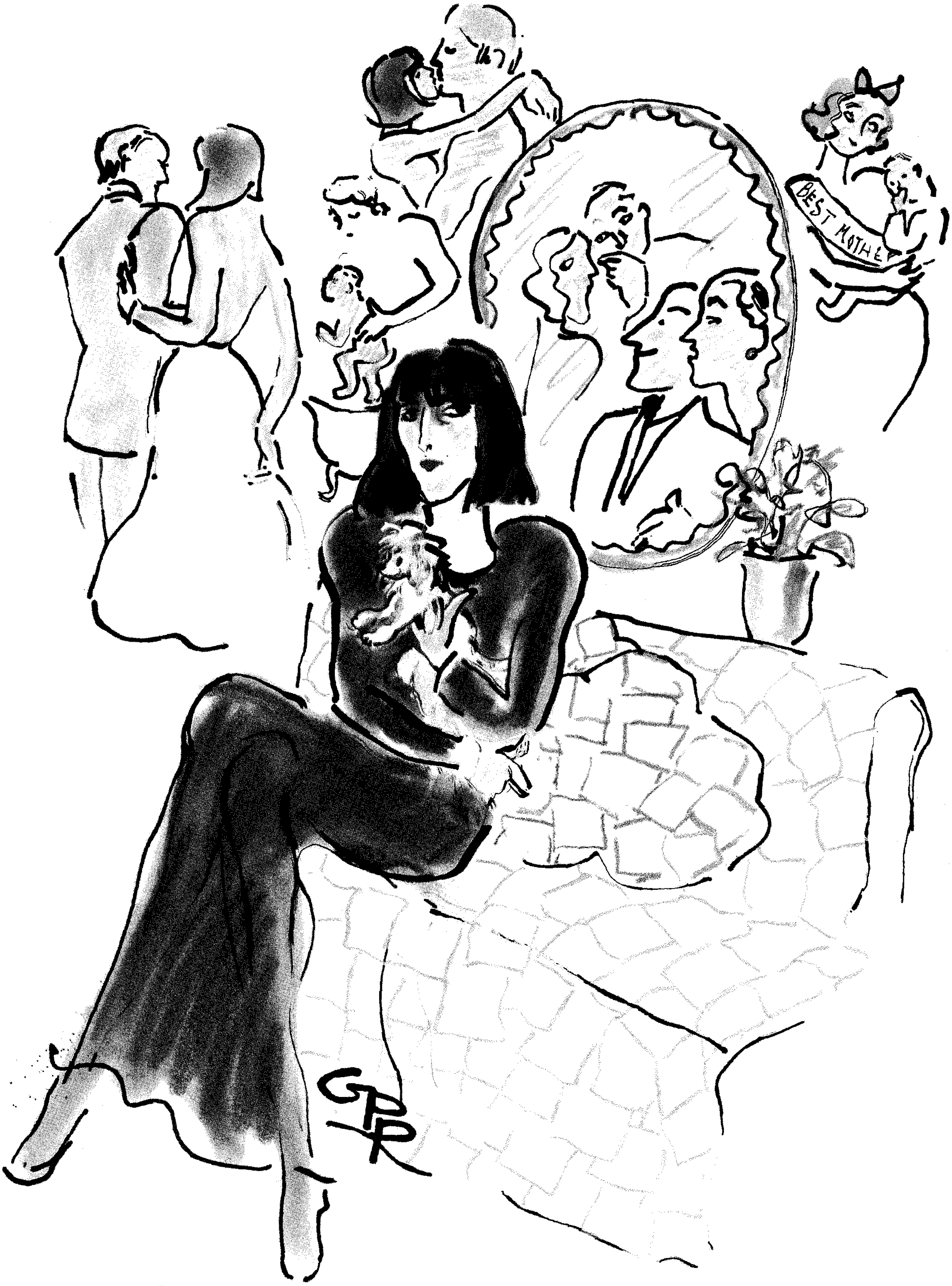
ONE summer, I spent a weekend in the country with married people. (She had been a close friend of mine for forty years; he never liked me. Ten years before, he'd thrown out some papers my friend had been saving in their attic for me, including a poster-size framed photograph of me in a nineteen-sixties advertisement for Jonathan Logan, which the photographer had made just for me. It was as if he were throwing *me* away. He did things like this, and my friend defended him, incessantly. "He's just a little boy," she said when he threw a crumpled-up paper napkin in my face at the lunch table once. I myself would rather be dead than be married to a man like this.) When I walked into the kitchen early Sunday morning, the husband was alone with their eighteen-month-old granddaughter—a baby who had kissed me sweetly on the lips a few months before and called me "Atson." He looked up at me and then, right in the baby's ear, he said, in a condescending, whispery voice, "Alison's *crazy*, she's *crazy*."

Later that day, their son, with his wife—Puppy Jane and I were in the back seat with the baby—drove me, under orders, frantically, to the train station. We missed the train, so we ended up chasing it from town to town, the baby screaming all the while. It was raining hard, and I had this flimsy carrying case with holes in it for Puppy Jane, but, nevertheless, the young man and his wife and the baby drove off and left me and Puppy Jane in the hard rain under a rickety umbrella at a train station without an overpass because they had a dinner date with her parents, whom they saw often. If I had been a married woman and Puppy Jane had been a real baby, they would never have done that.

A few nights later, at a concert in the city, the wife—a kind, refined young woman—took me aside and, to my astonishment, said quietly, "If I were you, I'd never speak to us again."

The truth is, it's a form of actual day-to-day social torture to pretend not to notice the little dishes of poison that married people offer you all the time. And especially people who have children. They convey that there isn't any point to my existence if I haven't got married and had a baby. I've noticed that insufferable wives expect me to think it's the saddest thing possible to be childless. And although it is truly nobody's business what I think about childlessness, when they ask me about it, I lie—absolutely lie—anyway. I say, "Well, it's something I just don't think about." It's unpremeditated

GLADYS PERINT PALMER


BEST MOTHER
GPR

I never did think of myself as a person who would get married and live in a house.

lying—a spontaneous killer instinct.

One night in Saint-Moritz about twenty years ago, after I'd walked all around a lake with a tall German—I never did get his name straight, but I had to have him or die—I went on to spend the morning with him in a hotel room with white ruffled curtains, and I came back to New York pregnant. My mother said over the telephone from California that if I attempted to have the baby alone I could go on welfare. My psychiatrist said, reminding me of all the things I wouldn't be able to give the baby, "But what about her ice-skating lessons?" I didn't have her after all, but from time to time I thought about that pronoun.

I never wanted a baby. I never thought about it, except for that pronoun. I never had baby dolls when I was little. I hated baby dolls, because they looked fat and naked and dead. What I did like a lot were the "Little Women" dolls my mother bought for me one Christmas; they had creamy skin and thin bodies and those paisley-print dresses which fit them so nicely around the bodice, and the expressions on their faces weren't stupid.

At a party not long ago, a depressed man I know—it is his depression I love him for—took all his boy baby's clothes off just to show me what a strong body the baby had. He was tall for a baby and had big shoulders and what looked like actual muscles in his thighs. This depressed man later told me over the telephone that the only thing in life that made him feel good was playing with the baby in the mornings. He said he was certain the baby liked him. At that moment—just for a few horrible seconds—I felt plain jealousy, instead of fury. I was happy for him, but it was clear that I was fatally left out.

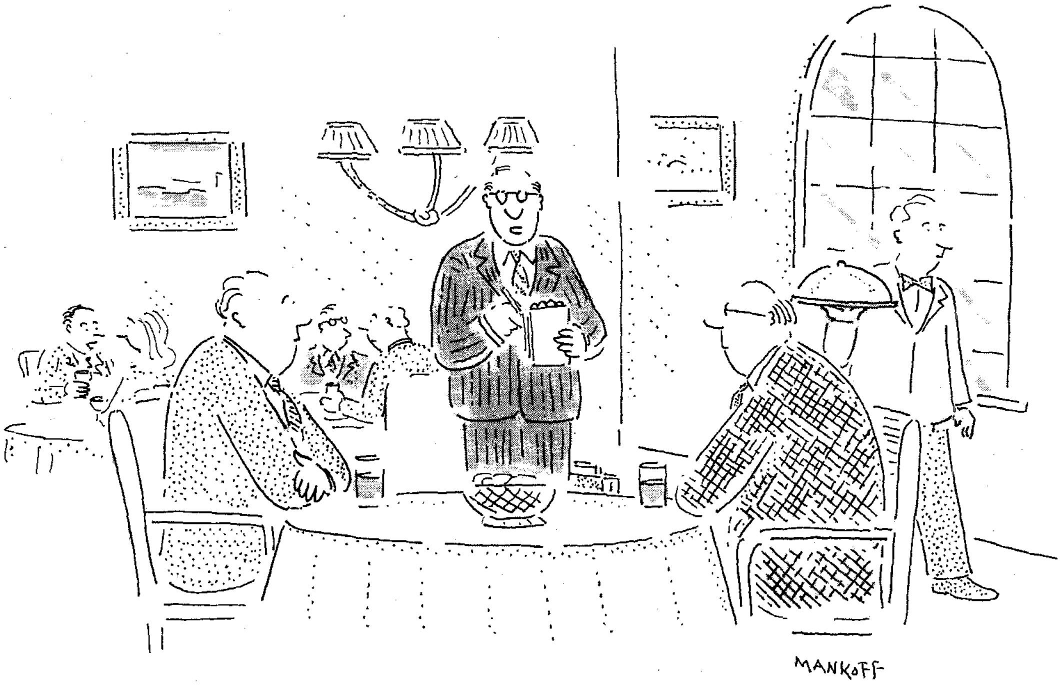
Anyway, the whole point is that mothers have *made their own friends.* Literally, they made them out of their bodies. No justifiable *tristesse* of mine, or, for that matter, exaltation—about a man, or a Nobel Prize in Physics I'd just won—would make any difference to one of these mothers, next to those living things she had made for herself. A friend of mine, a rich young grandmother, says that all she cares about, in the end, is "chubby arms around my neck." I do at times think it may in fact be all that matters, but I detest the competitive way she says it and the smug moral high ground she claims for herself. I might tell her that Clark Gable and Franz Kafka called me up the other day and she'd still come around to mentioning those chubby arms around her neck.

It's exhausting to be in the company of married people, with children or no; it forces me into a state of emergency alert, in which I have to rescue myself from interrogation and possible disgrace. (Beguiling, on-cue self-rescue is *very* tiring.) Their incomprehension and condescending fakeness are thick in the air, no matter how they try to hide it. ("No, no, it's *our* treat," a twenty-dollar bill shoved back and forth across the table.) The fun part for me—like the thrill successful bank robbers must feel—is, after an escape from the restaurant, gloriously alone, to flag down a taxi, whiz across the Park, slam the taxi door on Sixty-eighth and Madison, and then run, long black coat flying, half a block and up the stairs to my pretty room, where the animals, with their unabashed enthusiasm, are waiting.

THE ORIGINAL MARRIED MAN

I NEVER did think of myself as a person who would get married and live in a house. My mother and father seemed like two separate freaks in the house where I grew up, so to me marriage was a state and a house was a place in which people who are wittily mean to each other live in an isolated way.

At the dinner table, my sister—she's six years older—and I would sit at our places in our school uniforms, navy pleated skirts and white middy blouses. This was in Palo Alto, California, in the fifties. A little crystal bell sat on the table by my mother's place, to call the maid. ("Don't forget the finger bowls and the butter balls," my sister said on the telephone the other day.) My father, who was a psychiatrist and was very tall, sometimes told witty, mean stories about his movie-star patients—the human race was really hopeless, according to him—and scary, world-coming-to-an-end stories about his friend Robert Oppenheimer. Then he'd turn his attention to me and say in a very loud voice, "How are you, Personality Minus?" He had a way with language, even while he yelled and threatened to send me to the Agnew State mental hospital, where he went on his after-dinner



"Gentlemen, let's do lunch."

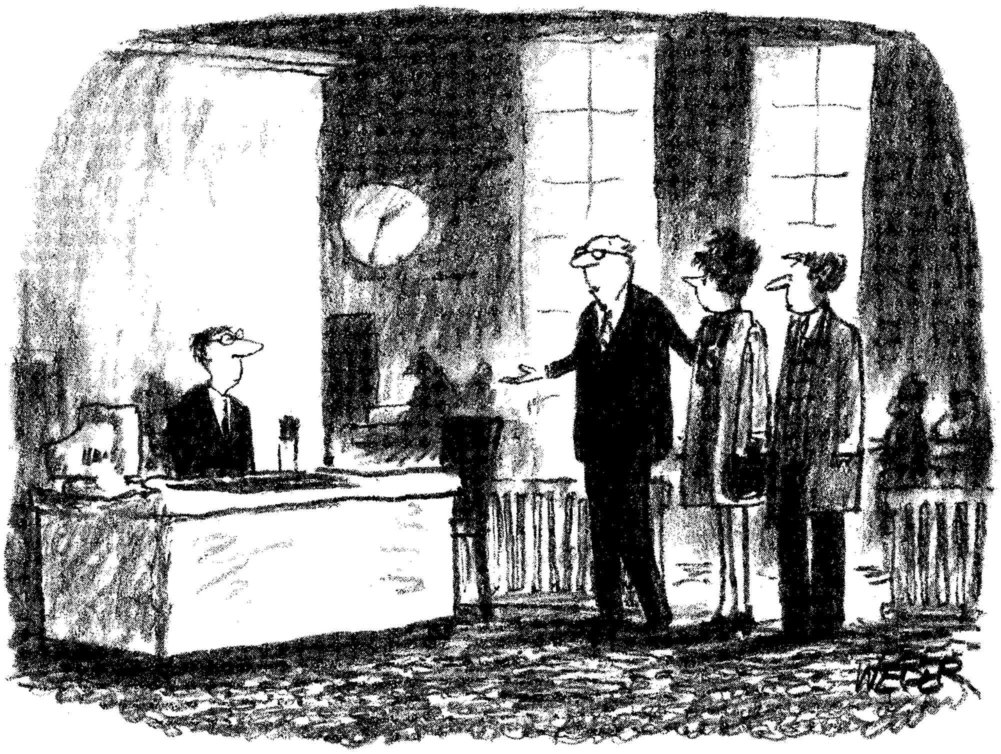
rounds. At other times, he might say to me, as if there were only the two options, "You're going to be a femme fatale, Babs." (My mother and my sister and I were Babs I, Babs II, and Babs III to him, though none of our names resembled the name Barbara.) At breakfast, he sang songs to himself like "I don't want her, You can have her, She's too fat for me" while the maid served him a soft-boiled egg and her shoulders shook with laughter. Most of my mother's friends (except the one who had been married to Otto Rank) had little crushes on him. For Christmas, he got dozens of presents from what my mother called "grateful patients." He was a bully and a tyrant and some kind of a handsome star and completely depressed and droll. As a result, I think a boyfriend is a bully and a tyrant and some kind of a handsome star and completely depressed and droll.

I started to have grownup boyfriends when I was about nine or ten. They were my sister's boyfriends, so in a way they were like married men—married to her. They went to Stanford (my father had gone there when he was fifteen). They were "wishy"—a word I invented, which meant "to be wished for." They came over to see me even if my sister wasn't there. They also came over because there was lots of food and the garden looked good. There was an orange tree outside the breakfast room, and a loquat tree, but the main thing was the bougainvillea and the wisteria that grew all over the veranda off my bedroom. In the late spring, after school, the boyfriends would come over and I'd put on a black nylon bathing suit and we'd lie by the pool, off the terrace, listening to Ella Fitzgerald sing, "Ten cents a dance, That's what they pay me, Gosh how they weigh me down," which was blasting from my father's phonograph, the living-room doors wide open.

LES ENFANTS TERRIBLES

WHEN I was twenty, I lived with three other girls in a ground-floor apartment at 300 Central Park West. I never had a plan about anything. None of us thought about getting married. One of the girls, Francine, who was blond and from Atlanta, made the living room—dark furniture, heavy drapes—her territory. She had trunks of clothes all over the place which her mother sent to her. Francine was so pretty that people felt disoriented around her. She wasn't like a person, a regular human girl. You could *feel* her spirit, and her startling kindness. She'd say to me, "You're so pretty—your hair's like mink." She had thin-ballerina upper arms; a large doll's head and face, like a nineteen-thirties screen idol; and blue eyes that didn't blink much. She had no hips at all. There wasn't any man who didn't get the point. Suzy the columnist saw her at balls, where she wore dresses from her trunks, and Suzy called and asked her to more parties. I got the point, too: she was ineffable, and she wasn't afraid to leave the house. As she got ready to go out, Francine would sit cross-legged on the Oriental carpet in a yellow Jean Harlow-type nightgown, with an iced tea nearby, holding a large hand mirror and putting on Aziza cake mascara. It took her forty-five minutes.

I, on the other hand, barely left the apartment. One night, on the way back from buying Betty Crocker brownie mix on Columbus, I actually *found* a beautiful young man, in front of our apartment, on the floor, passed out drunk. I dragged him inside, which was hard, because he was six feet tall. His name turned out to be Duncan, and soon we were living in weird hotels together and staying in all day, except for going down to the deli for bologna with green olives in it. Like me, he got some money from home—his came from North Carolina. Tennessee Williams called a couple of times, and then Duncan's voice would get more Southern, would become a real drawl. I think I was jealous of Tennessee Williams. At night, we lived in bars until closing time (Sorabaja, on the Upper East Side; the White Horse; Chumley's—watching Zoot Sims put dimes in the jukebox), and in the beginning I had little fantasies of marrying him. I pretty much gave up on that when I finally had to put him in Gracie Square Hospital because he thought God was talking to him in the Wellington Hotel. It seemed I was developing a sort of ruthless, practical



"This is Mr. Harrington, our mortgage nerd."

• •

side. I was sad when I had him committed; we had been like "Les Enfants Terribles" together.

FOOD

It's possible to have fun with inappropriate behavior and doing the wrong dance with the wrong people. For a time after Duncan left, I lived with a short gay man I called Mother. He made me feel safe. He took a photograph of my face for Clinique, but even when it was all over one wall at Bloomingdale's and in Le Drugstore in Paris the mention of it made me feel fat. An hour before the shoot, I had eaten an amazing amount of Chinese food with my other gay friend, Baby Jim (he had spent time at Austen Riggs, Stockbridge, where William Inge got treatment), and, all by myself, an entire Sara Lee orange cake.

During this time, I savagely, perhaps foolishly, turned down a proposal of marriage from someone I used to call Wheat Field—a blond, aristocratic boy I'd known since I was seven, who was leaving Harvard to live in Great Britain. Somehow I couldn't feel that a nice thing was happening to me, whatever I may think now. A couple of years ago, he said in a restaurant on Forty-third Street, "I quite loved you when I was at Harvard." There were others: a blond with a craggy face, from acting class, whom I worshipped because he played Holden Caulfield and James Agee so well; an energetic Greek who took me to eat Greek food in Astoria, Queens, and was better at sex than any of them, and made me listen to Richie Havens sing, "Got those sit down can't cry Oh Lord I'm gonna die blues."

TRUTH AND BEAUTÉ

Sometimes a wishy surprise can come out of adultery. Francine had been living in L.A. for a while when I moved there, and one day she and I were driving around town in her black M.G.B. and we stopped at a little store with American quilts and antique toys and painted furniture in it. The owner, a really beautiful man in tennis clothes, had a French wife, but I didn't know that then. He brought some quilts to my apartment on Doheny, and we had sex in my bed there. He was very refined, didn't say much; he seemed like the saddest man I'd met so far. One night, I was home alone, wearing my best nightgown from Bendel's, with my hair as clean as if I'd been waiting for someone, and the French wife knocked on the door and announced herself. She came in wearing a trenchcoat, and made some effort to hit me. We ended up calling her husband, he came over, and we all smoked cigarettes—three little lights in the dark—and became friends. Dinners. Driving around. Louis Armstrong records. Ferris wheel on the Santa Monica Pier. There were thousands of books in their house—it was like a secret paradise in the middle of a giant trash can—and roses in their garden. After he died in a car crash (he'd written me a strange note a few days before: "My life is filled with sex and sorrow. I'm going to kill myself tomorrow"), she and I remained close. Sisters of the Sacré-Cœur, she called us. She dressed me, as if I were a rag doll, in beautiful dresses she had designed and in her own clothes. She taught me how to look like Alison Rose, and even before he died they'd made my apartment on Doheny look like a pretty baby's room.

LIVING ALONE IN L.A.

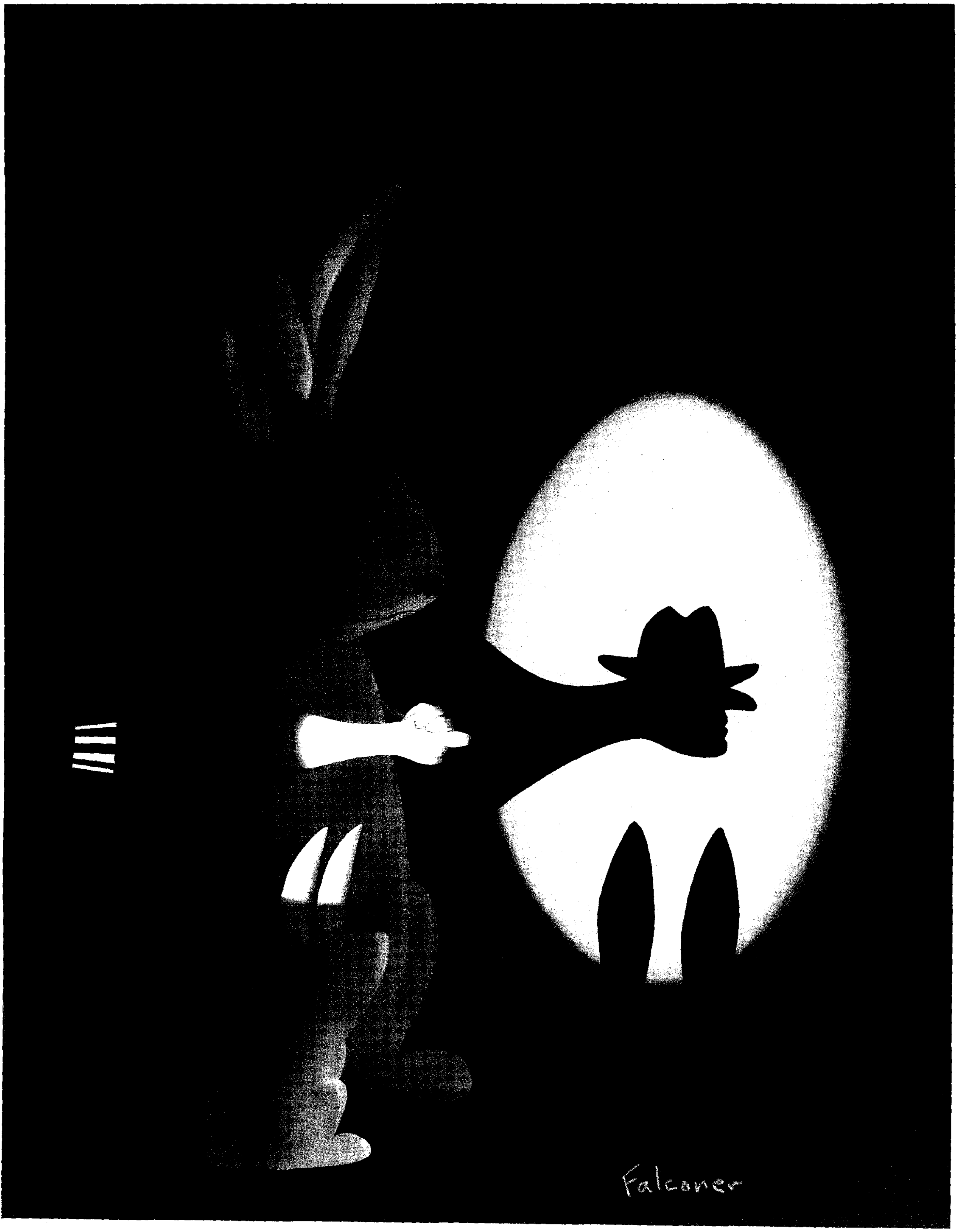
Living alone in Los Angeles is like living in Los Angeles without a car. The only *real* boyfriend I ever had (a live-in-a-house-together boyfriend) I had there. I was so nervous in Los Angeles that I couldn't drive, so Billy took the laundry—scary old green towels—to the Fluff & Fold on Santa Monica, and I walked to the Sun Bee, on Sunset, for groceries. Four nights a week, I walked to the Actors Studio, where I was doing scenes, and once played Gardner McKay as a boy, a retarded boy. Night or day, I was the only one walking: blazing sun, New York shoes, long striped knit dress, too thin—and one day Bruce Dern, whom I'd met at the studio, yelled at me from his car, "Smile, you fuckin' asshole! *Smile!*"

Billy's father had always called him Billy the Bum, but I called him Billy the Fish, and then other people did, too. I wanted him to want to marry me. He had the silkiest pale-blond hair and was darkly funny. He had one leg that was slightly lame from polio, and he limped fairly badly, which was endearing, because the rest of his body was more or less like Burt Lancaster's; Burt Lancaster was his father. For a couple of years, Billy the Fish and I had a sort of domestic life in this seedy house on Hilldale, where I cleaned and cleaned, especially the kitchen floor. Billy typed me a semi-insulting note: "Alo is a maid and only a maid." It was an old, gray, flat-roofed house half a block south of the Sunset Strip, with rickety, decaying furniture. There was a small fake Christmas tree with fake oranges on it, which Burt Lancaster had given us one Christmas, as a nice gesture, but it was the one concrete thing that always said to me "Life does not make sense." The chances of my losing my footing with Billy never diminished, and sometimes I took five or six blue Valiums during the day, along with an Eskatrol, which was speed that Daddy had prescribed for me. Billy the Fish drank too much and sometimes blacked out, or he made pots of coffee. There was something innately glamorous and triste about his presence. He dominated everyone around him, and lots of people dropped by to see him, to drink and to feel off balance about whether he favored them or not. Sometimes we went to the house that he had grown up in, in Bel Air—a faux river ran through it, a "water feature"—and his father's black maids took care of us and cooked. Sometimes two of his three sisters were there, and things felt safe. We *did* things. I wanted to marry all of it. Billy's father often recommended my coming out of depression: just doing it, no fooling around. When he told me not to be crazy, in his big kitchen, in that lilting, authoritative Burt Lancaster cadence—all the words going up, and then all the words going down—I almost wasn't crazy after all. I guess I wanted to marry *him.*

Toward the end, Billy went up to his mother's house, above the Sunset Strip, to stay for a while. I was by myself in the house on Hilldale, washing my hair and curling it in the morning with one of those plastic, sit-under-it, pretend-you're-in-a-beauty-parlor dryers, and then I'd sit on the ugly sofa, sometimes all day, in a skirt and T-shirt. Sometimes the actress who played a schoolteacher in "Splendor in the Grass," Martine Bartlett—I knew her from the

SKETCHBOOK · BY IAN FALCONER

AND FOR MY NEXT TRICK . . .



studio—came by and kept me company. Then, in an attack of clarity, I decided to move back to Doheny, to my own baby apartment (which I had sublet, so it was still there). I never told Billy I was going to save myself; I just did it. I carried small pieces of furniture and clothes on hangers and things in bags up Sunset to Doheny—I made several trips—in the middle of the night. I saw Billy passing in his blue Volkswagen when I was carrying two yellow kitchen chairs under my arms, but I kept going.

THE NOTHING SHOW

I MOVED back to New York. I spent most of my thirties typing temporarily at a hundred and twenty-eight different places—from the dinky kind to Prudential. No one in particular meant anything to me, and I lived alone in nice or not-nice places that other people owned. The penthouse on Sutton Place had a whole glass wall devoted to the East River, in front of which I'd race back and forth to Rod Stewart's "I Don't Want to Talk About It," fantasizing that I'd already got the job I'd decided I really wanted, working at a certain magazine. I made a plan to get myself hired, and carried it out in two years. Then I got my room on Sixty-eighth, and I got Toast at the A.S.P.C.A.—a year and a half old, full grown—as a reward for not taking any more Valium.

SCHOOL

I HAD a very small receptionist's cubicle with a phone in it, a typewriter, a window onto the elevator lobby, and an extra chair. The men who sat in that chair or stood in the doorway talking to me weren't just men: they were writers, and at that magazine writers were a tribe of gods. Everybody thought so. My best friend and I called the office School, because it was like that. I wrote notes to the boys, and they wrote back. Three of the five men I liked best—Personality Plus, Harold, James, Mr. Normalcy, and the Man from Southeastern Europe—had been married a few times and were married then. But all of them were—and they made me feel—deeply engaged (*sérieux*) and seriously attracted. It was affection of another order. For four years, I detested weekends and lived for Monday and the school week.

Harold would tell everyone I was really smart. He would do it in the corridor. He'd say, "Isn't she pretty?" and "She's really smart," in a phony Harvard accent, and it sounded as though he were reading the Bible out loud. If I seemed downtrodden some morning, he might charge around in his long coat, lean in the doorway, and say, "Take up your position as countess," or, one time, "Write a column from a femme semi-fatale." Reading his stories before I met him, I had thought he might be short and fairly ugly, but he turned out to be tall, and his shoulders looked very good in a gray T-shirt when he sat in my other chair in summer. When he wasn't there, he called me from home in the mornings. His pet name for me was "my bride." Later, he made up another name for me that made me laugh: Already Utterly Ruined. I used to write long letters to him. I wrote to him about James a few days after Harold introduced us:

> James is a new twisted thrill, a blond one. I caught him eating porridge in the window of The Fountain this morning. He wanted to be caught, I guess. But with a sad little fried egg approaching? I saw the strawberry jam through the glass, spylike. Then I got up my nerve and went in.
>
> "About last night," James said, "you should be *ashamed*."
>
> "I'm never ashamed. That's my sickness," I said. He had a way of chewing his food that was vehement, and he did that. I left the coffee shop.

I hadn't seen James the night before, and he hadn't seen me. He was improvising, and I loved that. He had the flirtiest speaking voice: you *had* to become part of his picture when he talked to you. You weren't you, you were *him* for a minute or two—there was nothing like it. One time, in a dark bar where businessmen went, after he'd taken me to a dinosaur movie, he said, "*Some* came a hundred miles and spent a hundred dollars just to take you to the *movies.*" He said it loud. He said everything loud, and it was as if nothing could ever make me scared again. When he did come to School, he would stand in the cubicle doorway while I took messages on the phone. Once, he crossed his arms as he watched me ignore the phone ringing and said, "Answer the phone. I'll still be here." An-

WHAT IS A GARDEN

All day working happily down near the streambed
the light passing into the remote opalescence
it returns to as the year wakes toward winter
a season of rain in a year already rich
in rain with masked light emerging on all sides
in the new leaves of the palms quietly waving
time of mud and slipping and of overhearing
the water under the sloped ground going on whispering
as it travels time of rain thundering at night
and of rocks rolling and echoing in the torrent
and of looking up after noon through the high branches
to see fine rain drifting across the sunlight
over the valley that was abused and at last left
to fill with thickets of rampant aliens
that brought habits but no stories under the mango trees
already vast as clouds there I keep discovering
beneath the tangle the ancient shaping of water
to which the light of an hour comes back as to a secret
and there I planted young palms in places I had not pondered
until then I imagined their roots setting out in the dark
knowing without knowledge I kept trying to see them standing
in that bend of the valley in the light that would come

—W. S. MERWIN

other time, he said, "Darling, we're *almost* like other people," and my psychiatrist, whom I've been seeing for thirty years, wrote it down.

The first year we knew each other, James invited me up to his house in the country for Christmas. We arranged to meet by the clock at Grand Central on Christmas Eve to take the train north. I remember him standing by the information booth in an old Brooks Brothers coat. There was a sturdiness about his body and an uncontrived, East Coast straggliness to his thinnish blond hair. It was easy to pretend he was my boyfriend, though he never really was. We were best friends. I had knitted him a scarf, and he was wearing it. On the train, he read me things from the *Times*, and we laughed. He had a twinklingness in his blue eyes. In his big living room he had just a few bare twigs stuck in a utilitarian pail for Christmas decorations. He took me to see friends of his, and to church, and we sang with the congregation. On Christmas Day, he gave me a bracelet that had belonged to his grandmother, just the way a normal man might do with a normal woman.

Toward the end of my knowing him, he said on the phone, "These are the Rules of the Tunnel. You need: a flashlight, a pistol, a rope." Then he said, "The more honest you are about learning the Rules of the Tunnel, the faster you move through it." Then he said, in a semi-inaudible voice, "This is as far as human beings are allowed to go in conversation," and he hung up. He always just hung up when he felt like it. He did it to everyone. He could hang up in person, too.

AFFAIRS

HAROLD loved his wife, and he claimed that she'd said, "I'd rather you had an affair than smoke." We smoked. He said having an affair with me wasn't a good idea anyhow, because I was "undefended." He did say one time that if I married James he and I could have an affair, though I knew he wasn't serious. Still, I wrote it down, and a lot of other things he said to me, right in front of him. He'd say, "You're my recording angel."

We had fights, too. To console me, he said over the telephone, "We've had fights about emergencies since we've known each other. I can only handle your emergencies when I don't have one of my own. Otherwise, I have to wonder how you are for fifteen minutes, and I can't do that when *I'm* crazy. Now listen, you're strong as an ox."

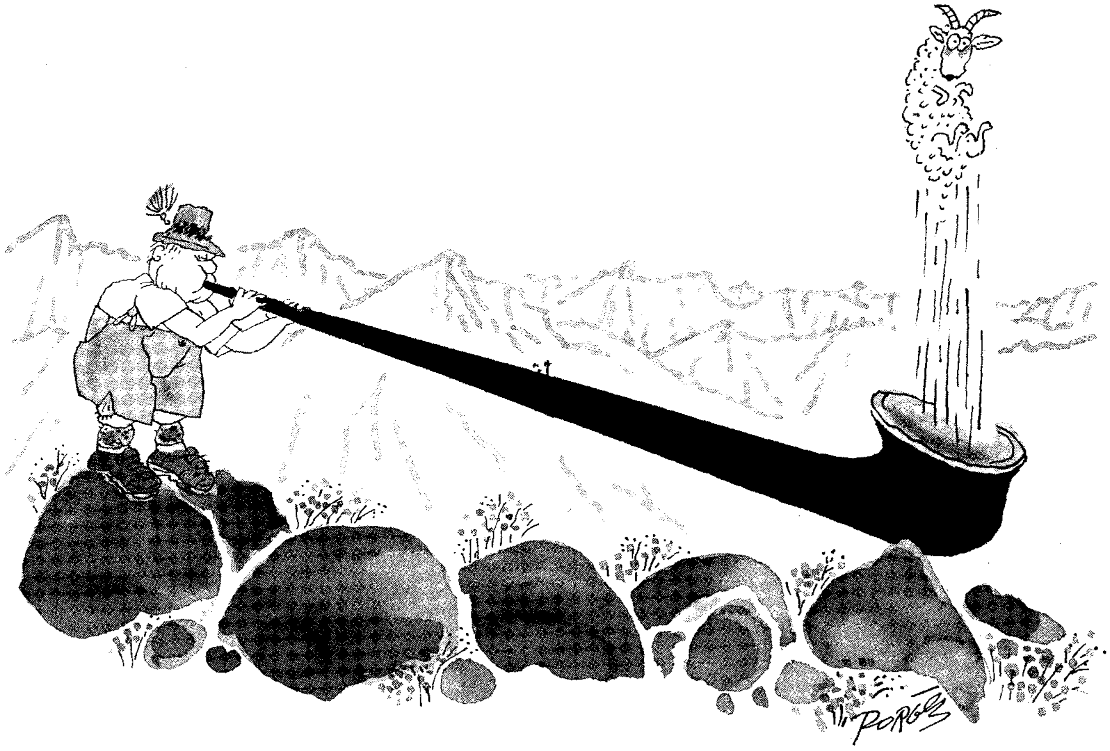
For a year and a half, Harold organized frequent dinners: his wife, James, me, and five or six others. We covered every subject on earth—Jesus Christ finally broke us up. James and I would be like a couple, though of course we weren't; James remarked (apropos of a dress that I had on), "Not defined by a partner, so Search for Self through bias and cut."

MR. NORMALCY

THIS man—his expression was almost as sulky and satyric as my rock-and-roll singer's—used to visit some writer friends at School. He was younger than I was, and a more normal kind of man. He overdid it with the semi-faux conventionality, so much so that Harold dared him to write a book about normalcy. He should have done it. He was so normal that I could introduce him to my mother when she came to town, and I did that one evening at Bemelmans Bar, in the Carlyle Hotel. She liked him more than any of my other men, and for a while they sent witty notes to each other across the country.

He gave me some nice gray shorts for my birthday one year, and I bought him a raincoat that he wore for years, and I sometimes called him for reassurance when I felt depressed. He used to come over to my apartment, but not that often. Sometimes on his way in or out at School he would grab me, my whole self, hard, and kiss me on the lips in the cubicle and then run away fast, so he wouldn't get caught. One time, he said I was pretty as if there were no two ways about it. "But what about when I get old?" I asked. He said, "You're old now," which was true, so that remark oddly gave me confidence.

He could be humanitarian in an irritating way. Once, two polar bears killed a little boy at the Prospect Park Zoo, in Brooklyn, and the authorities shot them. I was upset that the bears



had died, and when I told him that he said, "You're a twisted person. I want to fuck you, but I don't like you. You have no humanity." Somehow, I didn't say, "Fuck you, too." I thought I would lose him if I did.

Once, though, we were in his Volvo going up Madison, and he said I was the only person who knew he wasn't really normal. "Without my wife and kids, I'd be a first-rate lunatic," he said. "They're my cover." There was a small pause. I said, "But I don't have a cover." He parked his car in front of my building, switched off the ignition, turned to face me, and said, "All of us who love you are your cover."

Another night, when his wife was away, he cooked dinner for me at his apartment, in between rounds of sex. Watching him cook, I felt what it was like to be a person a guy like this had dinner at home with. It was Paradise. He was like a whole family in one person. I stayed the night, and he made breakfast for me, too. When I left, out on the street with myself again, I had not even a *frisson* of regret, though I was swaying a little from the abrupt orphandom.

Once or twice over the years, he said, "You don't like me that much," which was both true and a lie. When I see him now, years later, at a party, I still wish he would take care of me—not divorce his wife and marry me but bring me a Diet Coke with lemon and be my brother.

DO NOT BEND

PERSONALITY PLUS, a tall man with a small nose, was unpleasant to everyone. Out in the world, all kinds of people thought that what he said was heartening and important; around School, he hummed to himself like a warning that he was radioactive. He did things for me all the time—things I wished a man would do, like call all the way from Singapore when I was sick. He once offered me the use of his apartment for a dinner party I was giving. He would come up to my desk in the cubicle, and when he stood there in front of me, humming and tall, with his big head, I felt thankfulness and hope, which might have been what other people call love. He was the only one who made me feel that way. He gave me three office-supply-store stamps with an ink pad. He walked in and silently lined them up on my desk. They said "Confirmation," "Approved," "Do Not Bend." He put a framed photograph of Toast on the desk in his office where family photos would normally be.

He was incredibly loyal. One time, when he and Mr. Normalcy and I had lunch and Mr. Normalcy said something indirectly insulting to me, the tall man subtly annihilated Mr. Normalcy; he diminished him in a way I've never heard a man diminish another man. It was simply thrilling.

When we were together in a midtown restaurant, dark wrist hair showed above the cuff of his pale-pink shirt. He was a little like King Kong. "The rest of me isn't," he said. Although for a while he was beside himself with affection—I have his postcards and notes in a neat pile in the back of my good-sweater drawer as proof—he was fundamentally attracted to me as if to his lifelong definition of a "bad girl." One time, after we had been in my bed for a while, he got up and sat on the windowsill and said, "Guilt." Then he got dressed and went off to take his grown children out to dinner. Most of the time, it didn't matter that much if anyone thought of me as a "bad girl." But now, when this man I did kind of cherish was actually rejecting me, I had an unexpected reaction: I wanted to give up, repent, move to Montana and work in a bakery.

THE MAN FROM SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

THE man because of whom I got my dog, Puppy Jane, wasn't shy about the flirtation and he wasn't ambivalent about it, either. He was my lover. He had had a prettier life in prettier places than the other men at School, and he paid me real romantic attention. He had big hands and fluffy hair, and one day, when all my favorites were around the cubicle at once, he hung from the doorway molding with both hands, as if on a jungle gym. He had the most beautiful clothes: his shoes were so soft I imagined you couldn't find them ready-made in a store. He had better manners than the other men and always said the right thing to everyone, though often with a slight stammer. He said he thought life was "endless," and I wrote to him every day to ease his boredom. Many women liked him—and why not?—and he liked them, too, but I was the only one at School. I knew there were a lot of women, because it was my job to answer the phone, and they called.

Later, when I had my own office, we would kiss while leaning against the locked door. Sometimes I would take the day off, a "sick day," to race all around town finding garter belts and things and pray that I didn't run into anyone from work. He would come over to my room, which he called Toast-sur-Mer, and we had all-day sex—and I mean all day long without a break—but then he would talk about his children. That made me want to die, but, instead, I pathetically put strawberries on one of my mother's plates and set it on the long table, and he sat there and ate them. Then he left. With him, I kind of looked forward to the next day at School, because there was a niceness in his sheepishness. After he left my apartment, though, I'd go out and buy, say, a scarf that cost hundreds of dollars which later I didn't even like.

One time, he was going away on a long vacation, and he came to see me in my office, closed the door and locked it, and kissed me goodbye very nicely. He seemed so sorry to be saying goodbye. I should have felt all right, but I didn't. I followed him in the elevator down to the lobby, where he refused—he's a stubborn man, anyway—to turn around and talk to me.

After that, I walked to the pet store on Lexington near my apartment, and when I looked into the cages I nearly fainted. I wanted a silky white dog—something totally mine—but did I actually want to *live* with some little animal? I put a white dog, a girl dog, on "hold." The woman there asked me if I wanted bows in her hair. The next morning, when I brought the dog home in a cardboard box and she followed me to the refrigerator, I wasn't sure if I liked her or not.

Sometimes when the Man from Southeastern Europe left my room (I'd hear the downstairs door shut and I'd try to see him from the window, but he was always too close to the buildings), I wanted to obliterate all that berserk, excessive love. I wanted to crush it to smithereens and stamp on it and have the life go out of it in the same way I used to stamp out my cigarettes on the sidewalk—back and forth with a fairly wide high heel. I wanted the nice little thoughts of him knocked right out of my head—to make sure the time I'd just spent with him was extremely dead. I couldn't actually have him, and that was that.

The thing that often happened next was that after about ten minutes I would allow the nice thoughts back in, would give them permission, which was a really special present to myself—just missing him, a normal heartsickness. But then I might think of him out there somewhere, at home, and things would get bad again. Really bad. There's a swirling dizziness that snuffs out fun-in-a-way heartsickness and replaces it with an infinite emptiness/nothingness—it's like an attack of gray ice all over the place. And no sounds. Putting the side of my face—straining not to lean too hard—on Puppy Jane's pink, fragile stomach helps, but it doesn't break down the attack completely.

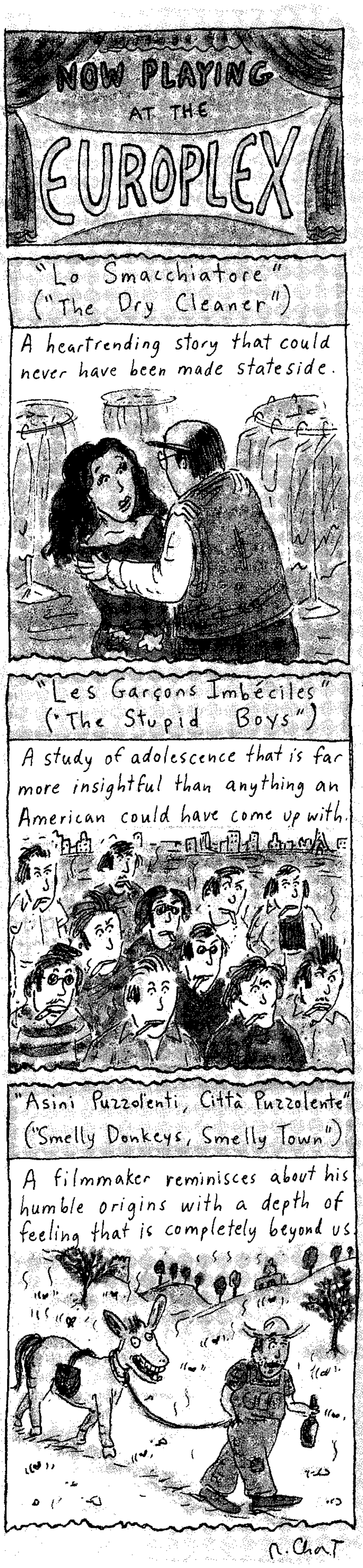
How the emptiness attack goes away and things become manageable again is unclear but oddly dependable. It's amazing the way a certain jubilation can take its place, with a little Coltrane, or some rice pudding. Maybe it's true that I'm happier with animals or a French dress or palm trees than with human company. A postcard James sent me some years ago has a picture of eight palm trees in a row under a blue sky (I've seen them look just like that from the terrace of a hotel in Beverly Hills), and on the back, in the middle of the card, in ballpoint pen, he wrote, "Get the point?"

My whole life I've thought about people—and thought and thought about them—but they're never right there in front of me, even when they are in front of me, because I'm just me alone thinking and trying not to get sent to Agnew. But sometimes, when the Man from Southeastern Europe was with me in my room, I felt an entirely different way. It seemed to me that he brought the highest reverence—a sort of tactile worship—to being up close to another person. He directed his entire consciousness toward me. I felt that presence physically, no matter where he was. But in my room it was his gift to make all of himself present to me, and I wasn't just me, by myself, hacking my way through the wilderness.

SELF-PITY

This past Thanksgiving, Billy the Fish listened to me make roast chicken over the phone. Actually, I've stayed friends with most of my old boyfriends, which matters to me. When I'm absolutely alone, though, I think it's somewhat fun to feel sorry for myself. It's a kind of soothing attention that isn't coming from anyone else. If I didn't have some self-pity, I would have a severe temptation toward violence. I could push smug Mrs. So-and-So down a couple of flights of stairs. Self-pity makes me not think of that. Also, self-pity can make me *do* things: wash my hair or clean the apartment, drag twelve pounds of laundry up Madison to the Chinese men. Then I can make babyish food for myself and wrap myself up in a bandage of fresh sheets. Or write a letter. Or call Francine. In a way, I don't see why my pleasure with self-pity should give anyone else a bad opinion of me or why I should care. I don't know what the Bible says about it, except that it's a thing not to do; but that makes self-pity like an outlaw by my side—a naughtily illegal friend doing me some good.

The other way to look at it is this: Self-pity, when it's like a disease, is a refusal to get the point about—to really see—the other person. If I am dizzy and sad about the Man from Southeastern Europe, say, who is walking down the stairs to Sixty-eighth Street (silent, *cher* loafers on the decaying brown-plaid carpet), then I have already refused to consider how that man was a non-English-speaking boy in Europe more than forty-five years ago. And, as I can see whenever I do go beyond the self-pity disease, part of the outcome of what had seemed his glorious life is that, after a lot of sex, he's also alone, walking fast one flight down on the cheap carpet. ♦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R. Chast

FICTION

MOTHER WITH CHILD

BY JONATHAN WILSON

MY mother and I drive in to the Old City of Jerusalem through Jaffa Gate and get stuck behind three donkeys and a bagel cart. Two feet away from the car, a boy juices orange halves with quick up-and-down motions on a silver crusher.

"See that?" my mother says.

She's not looking at the boy but farther down the street, toward a graceful Armenian arch vaulting across the sky into the side of a church.

"Reminds me of the horrible railway bridge on Park Avenue," she says. "Dark, dirty, disgusting place."

"This is not the old neighborhood," I tell her. "This is not northwest London."

"I don't care where we are."

"Then what exactly is the problem?"

After a few fake sniffles, she manages to get out, "They might have said I looked pretty."

We have just come from visiting Rachel and Aron Belz—her first cousins, her only relatives in Israel, and practically her only living relatives on the globe. She had never met them before. As we left the house, where I have been eating Friday-night dinners throughout my nine-month sabbatical here, she loud-whispered, "Horrible accents. Poles." And they heard. These poor bastards who spent half the Second World War hiding in a forest and the other half starving in the camps. These decent, hospitable people for whom acknowledging my mother's looks did not top the list of "Things to do if we survive, even if we don't get the chance for fifty years."

"You're seventy-four. It's not the kind of compliment that always springs to mind."

"Well, that I had a pretty dress, then."

She goes back to tears.

The donkey in front of us looses a broad stream onto the road. I look across at my mother and have an ugly association. It's 1979, and I'm driving home from university. Some old drunk totters across the road, gets caught in my lights, and freezes. When he moves again it's to raise his thumb into hitchhiking position. I open the door, and he falls into the car. Almost as soon as he sits down, there's a terrible smell.

"I'm sorry," he says. "I've shat meself."

We drive eighteen miles to Clacton-on-Sea, then he gets out. The seat has a little stain and a thin brown liquid sheen.

My mother's moved on to another topic. Her favorite.

"You come here, to a land of Jews, and you find the only *yok* in Jerusalem."

"She came with me. We met in London. You know that."

"She's still a *yok*."

Yok is Anglo-Jewish for Gentile. It's worse than "goy" or "shiksa." It connotes viciousness, brutality, and deep, irredeemable stupidity. And my mother hasn't even met her.

"What's more, she's got 'Christ' in her name."

"Her name's Tina."

"What do you think that's short for, genius?"

Right then I decide two things: not to tell my mother that Tina and I are on the verge of breaking up (why should I make her happy?), and to return my mother, as speedily as possible, to her hotel.

I reverse the car, then circle round the back of the Old City. Halfway down the Mount of Olives, the burnished onion domes of the Russian Orthodox church, patched with snow, gleam in the February sunlight. It's my turn to say, "See that?"

My mother, the blinkered horse, refuses to turn her head.

"It's your life," she says.

"That's right."

"Drop me off here!" she suddenly screams. "I can't bear to be with you anymore."

"Here" happens to be the Arab bus station outside the Damascus Gate, where we are stuck at the light. People jostle for space, spill out of unruly lines, slip through brown belches of exhaust fumes. Then a demonstration comes round the corner—a couple of hundred men who aren't pleased with Arafat and are less pleased with the Israeli government.

"Oh, shit," I say.

My mother makes as if to open the car door.

"Go on," I say. "What's keeping you?"

A woman with a basket of plums on her head dips to offer us her merchandise. The bruised, split ripeness of the fruit, the whole sensual/sexual/violent fiasco of the place—plums *and* snow *and* yelling fundamentalists—is too much for my mother (it's too much for everyone).

"No, *thank* you," she says, in her best regal-imitation phone voice.

I think of setting her on a bus bound for one of the newly autonomous areas on the West Bank, maybe Jericho—someplace where the old are respected simply for being old, and personality is overlooked.

At the King Solomon Hotel, I pull up alongside the shaded entranceway. She gets out and slams the car door. Immediately, an elderly gentleman in a white suit, who, according to my mother, has been stalking her with intent to rape, steps out of the shadows; he's like an overweight Jay Gatsby.

"Mrs. Samuels. You're back! And this must be your son."

"He used to be my son."

Fat Gatsby looks baffled for a moment. But no, my mother's response is a familiar one after all.

"All children disappoint their parents," he says, but I can tell from his sweet, tanned, chubby face that he doesn't believe this; he's simply trying to ingratiate himself with my mother.

My mother gives me "the stare": she tries to do something with her eyes which will communicate hurt, annoy-

FILIP PAGOWSKI

ance, pathos, bathos, loneliness, and unyielding, mulish obstinacy. It's a brave but doomed piece of acting.

I drive off, and in the rearview mirror I see Gatsby waving. My mother has disappeared in the spin of the revolving doors.

IN the parking lot behind my apartment block on King George Street, the snow from the previous night has melted. I have to splash through a couple of icy puddles on my way in. As I push open the door to the building, Tina steps out from behind a large blue van. She looks about half an hour into her Ophelia impression: Millais hair, eyes wild, face drained of blood.

"You can't leave me."

I turn around like a coward and start to run back through the lot.

She pursues me, yelling, "What about the children?"

This stops me in my tracks.

"We don't *have* any children."

"But we could."

"Not if you keep sleeping with other people."

"It was one night."

"It was *many* nights."

She weighs this in her mind, like Yasmin, the woman who sells vegetables door to door and comes with a scale and three rocks, balancing what she wants against what she thinks she can get.

"At the time, you didn't seem to care," she says.

"What gave you that impression?"

"You didn't stop sleeping with me, did you?"

"That's different."

I have no idea what it is different from. In fact, I feel exposed. She's right; there have been times in our relationship when appetite overcame jealousy.

"How's your mother? When am I going to meet her?"

I start to labor up the hill.

"I want to go to the desert!" Tina shouts after me.

The last time we were in the Sinai, she threatened to drown herself in the Red Sea. She got drunk on cheap brandy, sang the biological-clock verse from Bonnie Raitt's "Nick of Time," and then ran fully clothed into the waves. I watched her head bob in the moonlight until it disappeared, and when I next saw her, she was lying face down on the dark apron of sand about a hundred yards upshore from where she'd set out. I approached at a run—stoned, out of breath, the stars wheeling around like crazed gulls. I said, "Are you all right?" and she replied, "You didn't try to save me."

It was true. On the other hand, as she well knows, because it is a source of great embarrassment to me, I can't swim. My mother, bless her heart, sent me to elocution lessons when all the other kids headed off to the pool.

I jog all the way down Shatz Street and up King George until I get to Independence Park. I buy a newspaper at a small kiosk from a man I've never seen before, who gives me a look of burning hatred, and take the paper into the Rondo café.

While I'm drinking their lukewarm coffee, I have one of those ideas that in retrospect seem so bizarre that they can only be explained by the action of chemical forces in the brain over which the individual has no control. She wants to meet my mother, I think; then let's *all* go to the desert.

THE following day, we pick my mother up at her hotel at 7 A.M. She's wearing something in patriotic blue-and-white that she calls a "trouser suit"—her clothes are much too hot for the desert, even in February, but we'll deal with that later. Tina, for her part, has decided to play it straight. She's got her hair pulled back and is wearing jeans and one of those embroidered peasant shirts that can be viewed as either conservative or hip, depending on your politics.

My mother insists on sitting in the front seat because of her legs, which, though shorter than everybody else's, are apparently too long for the back seat.

"Hello, dear," she says to Tina, her religious prejudices falling miraculously away in the presence of someone who might possibly be charmed.

"Hello, Mrs. Samuels. Nice to meet you, finally."

"Oh, do call me Barbara," says my mother.

"I'd love to," Tina replies.

"William's going to take us for a nice ride."

Tina does a tight little smile. "Have you ever been to the Sinai, Barbara?"

"The Sinai?" replies my mother, pronouncing the first syllable "sin" instead of "sign," in an attempt to sound classy. "I don't think I have."

"Don't think"! This is a person who, up until one week ago, chose not to go anywhere other than the streets of northwest London and a couple of deathly South Coast resorts with "Jewish" hotels.

"It's beautiful," Tina says.

My mother responds as if Tina had said "*You're* beautiful," and after a moment I realize it is because those are the words that she has chosen to hear.

"Thank you, dear. I was always a pretty girl, and as you see"—face tap—"no wrinkles."

"And how old are you, Barbara?"

"She's seventy-four," I say. "She was forty-one when I was born. You see, there's no need to rush."

Why am I doing this?

We take the new road down to the Dead Sea so no one will throw rocks at us. My mother tends to regard Palestinians in the same way that she treated the Russian Orthodox church on the Mount of Olives: theoretically she's willing to acknowledge their existence, but she would really prefer not to look. Tina, on the other hand, believes herself to be a great internationalist and a friend to all. Like most Brits, she is a powerful defender of the insulted and the injured, unless they happen to be Irish. During our year here, she has attended every Peace Now rally. In fact, it was at one of these gatherings that she met Joel Lemkowitz, a foreign correspondent for the New York Something or Other, a man with impressive credentials, and a believer, apparently, in frequent, unprotected sex with other men's girlfriends. ("I'm thirty-five—I *want* to have a baby.")

The fan on the passenger side of the dashboard whirs. My mother clutches at her hair as if her whole fluffed-out gray do might fly off.

"Switch it off! Switch it off! What are you doing, you idiot?"

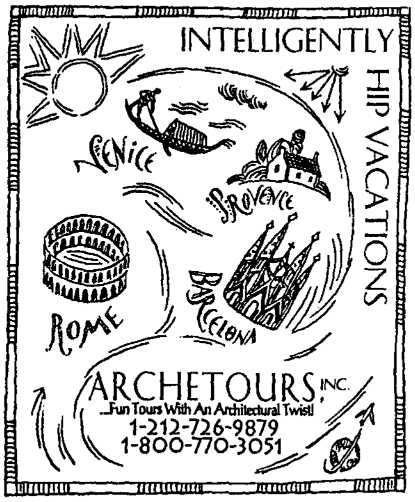
"Trying to cool you down."

"I'm perfectly cool."

She stares straight ahead at the unwinding ribbon of road. Her knees are pressed tightly together and her white handbag rests primly on top of them.

In the car mirror, I see Tina slowly lift her peasant shirt to show me she isn't wearing a bra.

At Ein Bokek, we park and make for the beach café next door to the psoria-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sis center that sits on the shores of the Dead Sea. Two tall, pale men in white sarongs, their scaly skin unembarrassedly exposed, walk past our table and head toward the soothing mud pile at the edge of the water.

"Who are they?" asks my mother.

"How should I know?" I say. "A Danish actuary and his orthodontist friend."

"Whoever they are, they shouldn't be allowed to walk around like that."

"Why not? Are the Nuremberg Laws in effect here?"

"Don't joke about the Holy Cost."

It is a brilliant stroke of my mother's to turn "Holocaust" into a kind of Irish pronunciation of "Holy Ghost." Oddly enough, for all her supposed deep-seated Jewish feeling, there's nothing she likes better than being told she doesn't look Jewish.

"I was in Germany once," Tina puts in. "On my way back from Denmark. I had a boyfriend in Copenhagen. A wonderful poet. I met him at the student hostel. He took me to Tivoli Gardens. His name was Niels Nordbrandt."

"*Den*mark," says my mother, her voice a low, throbbing imitation of something seductive. "How very interesting."

Tina goes back to the car to change into her swimsuit. To my astonishment, my mother decides to take to the water, too. I locate the changing room for her. She disappears inside and emerges ten minutes later looking very "pretty," by which I mean she's advancing down the concrete path in one-piece and heels as if it were a catwalk. We get to the edge of the water, and while I'm getting my mother afloat, which is like pushing a rowboat out to sea, I hear Tina, who is already immersed, yell cheerfully, "I've got salt up my cunt!"

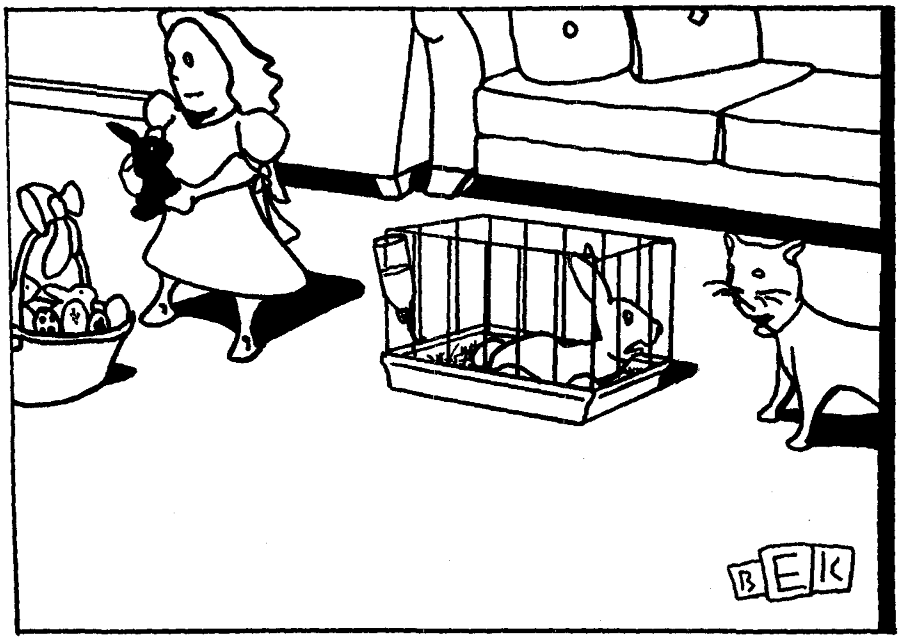
She waves gaily while a flotilla of German and Scandinavian tourists wildly start to paddle their salt-slicked bodies in her direction as if she'd announced that the bar is open for business. Most floaters clasp their knees and tool around in racing-driver position, but my mother has unfortunately turned on her front and, legs and arms up in Flying Nun mode, appears to be heading quite fast, O blessed current, in the direction of Jordan.

"Come on in!" Tina yells. "You can't drown."

I wave back and point to my shoes, an obscure gesture that I hope she will interpret in some way favorable to me.

After they have showered and changed and had something to drink, my mother says she's tired and would like to return to her hotel. She'll save the Sinai for another time.

Almost as soon as we start to drive, my mother falls asleep, or perhaps she has quietly died in the front seat. Tina starts doing the shirt thing again.



"Wouldn't you know—the one time I fall in love with a bunny he turns out to be chocolate."

"Pull over and come in the back," she says.

"Don't be ridiculous. We're not sixteen."

"She won't wake up."

"Tina, please."

"It's all that sun and sand."

"And salt."

"I'm ovulating. I took my temperature with the basal thermometer before we set out."

I drive on as if I haven't heard. I decide that I am drawn to desperation, the way some men are attracted to large breasts, because I am the son of a woman who pretends never to need anything.

Cold air hits us as soon as we start to climb; by the time we get back to Jerusalem, Tina's shivering and the chill has woken my mother up. In the driveway of the King Solomon, an ambulance pulls sharply in front of us. We get out of the car and see Fat Gatsby wheeled by on a stretcher. He's got an oxygen mask over his nose and mouth but manages to wave feebly at my mother, who ignores him completely. (At the funeral of her best friend's husband, she asked me, "Why is the rabbi talking about Alfie so much? He's dead.")

"Bye, Barbara," Tina says.

"Yes," my mother replies, expressing a hope.

BACK at our apartment, we go into the bedroom. Tina takes off all her clothes, then starts to unbutton and unzip mine.

"Do your duty," she says when we're both naked. "You've oppressed women for thousands of years."

I reach for her. She takes half a step back.

"Now, about those babies?"

She moves forward again, presses her upper torso into mine, delivers her hand into my groin, and repeats the question.

In this kind of situation, the options are limited, so I say something vaguely encouraging. But the moment I speak, the room's warm air is filled with clanging bells, alarms, sighs, the call of the muezzin, rabbinical wailing, the roar of a protesting crowd, and the righteous shrieks of my critics—who can't fail to note my Jewish self-hatred, my ego-driven refusal to accommodate simple desires, my jokes at the expense of the opposite sex—and, rightly, it seems, as we fall on the bed, it doesn't matter what I say. ◆

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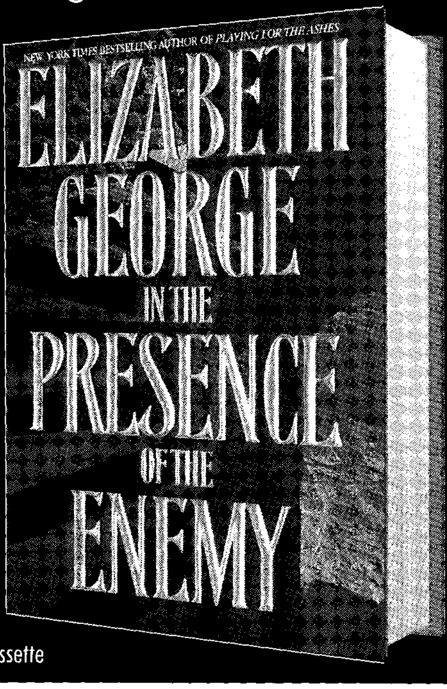
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BOOKS

MISFORTUNE TELLERS

In a new trend, Hell is other peoples.

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

"THE fiendlike skill we display in the invention of all manner of death-dealing engines, the vindictiveness with which we carry on our wars, and the misery and desolation that follow in their train, are enough of themselves to distinguish the white civilized man as the most ferocious animal on the face of the earth," Herman Melville wrote in "Typee." This "Peep at Polynesian Life," which describes his sojourn among natives of the Marquesas Islands, was a succès de scandale when it was published, in 1846. Denounced in missionary circles, its portrait of "heathens! savages! aye, cannibals!" who generally "deal more kindly with each other, and are more humane" than those who champion Christendom's "civilized barbarity," became a best-seller. Lewis Mumford, reading "Typee" in 1929, declared, "Eden is real."

The horrors of twentieth-century warfare seem to confirm Melville's view. But recent archeological and ethnographic evidence suggests otherwise. Hard by Melville's Typee valley, in Tahiti, the island's traditional society appears to have been among the most bellicose societies on record. The male mobilization rate in Tahiti's nearly constant wars was greater than the combined rates in the United States and the Soviet Union during the Second World War, and the fighting was anything but "kindly" or "humane." Spears were used to nail captured children of enemies to their mothers, and sometimes holes were bored through captives' heads so that they could be strung together like fish on a line. With no United Nations War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague to chide him, a Tahitian warrior also might use his war club to flatten an opponent's corpse like a cutlet, slit a hole in the poor fellow, and wear him around as a "trophy poncho."

Tahiti's violence is typical of the bands, tribes, and chiefdoms of preliterate, pre-industrial, non-urbanized peoples. In Crow Creek, South Dakota, some six hundred and fifty years ago, the mutilated remains of more than five hundred men, women, and children were dumped in a mass grave. Although such a casualty figure may sound unimpressive when measured against today's headlines, the costs for the tiny population involved were extreme. The Crow Creek massacre wiped out about two-thirds of the people in what may have been an entire, self-contained society.

Affairs among the !Kung, of the Kalahari—made famous in Elizabeth M. Thomas's popular ethnography as "The Harmless People"—were often settled in a comparably nasty fashion: between 1920 and 1955, the !Kung homicide rate was four times that of the United States during the nineteen-fifties and sixties. Even in isolated Tierra del Fuego a hundred years ago, the Yaghan "canoe nomads," who regarded the biological family as the "only sovereign political unit," had a murder rate ten times that of the United States.

The anthropologist and archeologist Lawrence Keeley, surveying the devastations of these primitive battles in his new book, "War Before Civilization" (Oxford; $25), calculates that "the United States military would have had to kill nearly the *whole* population of South Vietnam during its nine-year involvement there"—a million three hundred and fifty thousand people a year—"in addition to its internal homicide rate, to equal the homicide rate of the Gebusi," a tribe in New Guinea. Crunching some more numbers, he finds that the citizens of modern nation-states generally enjoy a far lower chance of being involved in a war or in homicide than those who dwell in Mumford's Eden.

Keeley aligns himself with Hobbes, who wrote, in "Leviathan," that, in the absence of "a common power to keep them all in awe," people will live in "that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man." Yet Keeley stretches the logic of his findings to the breaking point when he concludes that "the only practical prospect for universal peace must be more civilization," and that to attain this goal "we should strive to create the largest social, economic, and political units possible, ideally one encompassing the whole world." At what cost? As Melville remarked, "the Anglo-Saxon hive have extirpated Paganism from the greater part of the North American continent; but with it they have likewise extirpated the greater portion of the red race." And Keeley himself observes (albeit in a footnote) that Nazi Germany—as globally ambitious, and tribal, a modern, civilized state as we have seen—ranks as the most homicidal society in history.

IN swapping the archeologist's trowel for the torch of the crusading utopian, Keeley joins the growing ranks of academics and journalists who are no longer content to report what is happening within their particular domains of expertise but feel compelled to tell the fortune of the whole wide world. The trend has distinctly millennial overtones. We have been told that we are living in a condition called postmodern, in an era called post-Cold War, and these labels convey a floaty mood of hangover. On any given day, the newspapers announce that humanity is going global *and* that it is splintering into fragments. Religious observance is on the rise, and we are advised to learn Chinese. Clearly, these are not confident times. The old order no longer holds; the new orders, such as they may be, are without clear form. And the race is on to name them, to project the fault lines of today as the front lines of tomorrow, and to write what might be called the global book—one that will identify an organizing principle on which to construct the narrative of the future.

Not surprisingly, the authors of global books invariably join Keeley in regarding tribalism as a major threat to the public health of civilized political society. But Keeley's enthusiasm for the prospect of global government—and the bigger the brother the better—makes him a singularly optimistic figure in the current debate. For the overly cantonized world that Keeley finds in the past is more commonly regarded as the spectre that haunts the future.

This is how the German poet and essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger puts it in his 1994 book, "Civil War":

> The most obvious sign of the end of the bipolar world order are the thirty or forty civil wars being waged openly around the globe. We cannot even be sure of their exact number, since chaos is uncountable. But the signs are that things will get worse before they get better.
>
> No one was prepared for this turn of events. No one knows what to do. It could be that we have entered an entirely new phase of politics.

This is from "The Clash of Civilizations?"—a much discussed article by Samuel P. Huntington that appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993:

> It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. . . . The clash of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

This is from Benjamin R. Barber's "Jihad vs. McWorld" (Times Books; $25), which began as a cover story in *The Atlantic Monthly*:

> In being reduced to a choice between the market's universal church and a retribalizing politics of particularist identities, peoples around the globe are threatened with an atavistic return to medieval politics where local tribes and ambitious emperors together ruled the world entire, women and men united by the universal abstraction of Christianity even as they lived out isolated lives in warring fiefdoms defined by involuntary (ascriptive) forms of identity.

And this is from Robert D. Kaplan's "The Ends of the Earth" (Random House; $27.50), which also began, under the title "The Coming Anarchy," as a cover story in *The Atlantic Monthly*:

> The world, Huntington argues, has been moving in our century from nation-state conflict to ideological conflict, and, finally, to culture conflict. I would add that as refugee flows increase and as peasants continue migrating to cities around the world—turning them into vast villages—national borders will mean less, while political power falls increasingly into the hands of less educated, less sophisticated groups. In the eyes of these uneducated but newly empowered millions, the real borders are the most tangible and intractable ones: those of culture and tribe.

Apocalypse not? The global book strives to project the fault lines of today as the front lines of tomorrow.

LORENZO MATTOTTI

Taken together, these diverse voices proclaim a crisis in Western civilization. During the Cold War, foreign wars were all part of our war. However remote the battlefield, we could ask, "Are they friendlies, or are they not?" It didn't much matter to us who the people in those little countries thought they were, or what they thought they were fighting about; and when our war ended we assumed that theirs would, too. Apparently, they failed to understand that, as Keeley puts it, "the degree of mutual interdependence created by modern transportation and communications long ago rendered the concepts of national and ethnic self-sufficiency and self-determination absurd and dangerous delusions." The ambition of the global book is to find what foreign-policy strategists call a "paradigm" that will rope these restless natives back into the Western scheme of things.

WHEN *The Atlantic Monthly* sent Kaplan in search of "the new anarchy," he went to Africa because it suited his preconceived scenario. "Africa's vital statistics concerning population increase, living standards and violence were the worst on the planet," he writes—and, sure enough, "what I saw turned out to be consistent with what the statistics reveal." Kaplan's presumption that Africa can be described as a single place is typical of the attitude of the global book. In "The Ends of the Earth," Kaplan visits only West Africa, zipping through half a dozen countries in a sort of drive-by reporting trip of two months' duration; yet he presents himself as an authority on the entire continent. Similarly, Enzensberger, though he does not pretend to be a reporter, lumps dozens of diverse conflicts together, and declares, "What gives today's civil wars a new and terrifying slant is the fact that they are waged without stakes on either side, that they are wars *about nothing at all*."

What Enzensberger means by wars about nothing at all is what Keeley calls tribalism, what Huntington calls civilizational struggle, what Barber calls Jihad, and what Kaplan calls, almost interchangeably, fundamentalism, tribalism, and anarchy. What they all mean is the force of fragmentation, and, although it is hardly the only issue at stake in today's nationalist wars, it is obviously a major factor in many of them. But are these wars really so similar and so meaningless?

As the events of recent weeks have shown, Huntington may have been too quick off the mark when, in 1993, he wrote that, with the Cold War over, "cultural commonalities increasingly

"No, this is great. I love sifting through the loam of your past relationships."

• •

overcome ideological differences, and mainland China and Taiwan move closer together." But the current face-off of the two Chinas across the Taiwan Strait is a conflict entirely different from, say, the war between Peru's Shining Path and the Fujimori government; and the paradigm that might explain either of those struggles could not, in turn, account for the war between Kashmir and India, let alone the differences between the Christian Coalition and Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam.

By denying the particularity of the peoples who are making history today, the authors of global books deny the significance of the politics of those peoples, reducing the parties in all violent conflicts to equal partners in a meaningless fit of "tribalism." When the observer mistakes his failure to recognize events for the nature of those events, it's little wonder that he sees chaos. Thus Kaplan's claim that the Rwandan genocide gave a "gruesome currency" to his theory of "the coming anarchy" ignores the fact that Rwanda's horrors resulted not from the breakdown of state power but from the deliberate abuse of that power to create a politics of extermination. The global book, however, is all about surface—what is given off, not what's giving it off.

THERE is a map of the world in Benjamin Barber's "Jihad vs. McWorld" which indicates the countries that MTV reached in 1995; except for Africa, it is almost entirely shaded. The map illustrates the global reach of American culture: "fast music, fast computers and fast food—MTV, Macintosh, and McDonald's—pressing nations into one homogenous global theme park, one McWorld tied together by communications, information, entertainment, and commerce." Barber defines McWorld as the force of globalization, caught in an ultimate struggle with the splintering force of "a Jihad in the name of a hundred narrowly conceived faiths against every kind of interdependence . . . against technology, against pop culture, and against integrated markets; against modernity itself as well as the future in which modernity issues."

Although Barber represents Jihad as a force conceived largely in response to—and accelerated by—McWorld, he is convinced that McWorld will prevail. "Over the long haul," he asks, "would you bet on Serbian nationalism or Paramount Pictures?" Or, as Frank Holliwell, an anthropologist in Robert Stone's 1981 novel, "A Flag for Sunrise," puts it, in a drunken speech to a Latin-American audience, "In my country we have a saying—Mickey Mouse will see you dead."

Barber dreads this future. In his view, McWorld is a form of "commercial totalitarianism" that is every bit as hostile to civil society and democracy as Jihad is. But, even after he has devoted more than a hundred pages to enumerating the successes that transnational corporations have had in penetrating foreign markets, it remains unclear how the selling of Schwarzenegger movies and Nike shoes—"culture as commodity, apparel as ideology"—poses a threat on a par with the threat of "those militants who make the slaughter of the 'other' a higher duty." As for apparel, when the People's Republic of China recently hired Pierre Cardin to redesign some of its military uniforms, just whose ideology was winning?

"Jihad vs. McWorld" suffers from the very quality that most alarms Barber in the commercial nihilism he describes: an ungroundedness that leaves no room for citizens and communities. Is the TV show "Baywatch" or a bottle of Pepsi really the same for a mother of seven who works in a sweatshop in Karachi as it is for a jobless teen-ager in Bangkok, any more than Jihad is the same for each of them? The question matters, because it is in human variety that the resistance to the twin threats of Jihad and McWorld may reside. But Barber presents the eventual annihilation as if it were already accomplished: his world appears to be little more than a giant dumpster for McWorld's trashy culture.

Still, he makes the future sound a great deal more promising than the Malthusian endgame that Robert Kaplan foresees in "The Ends of the Earth."

BILLED as "A Journey at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century," Kaplan's book takes the form of a travelogue, beginning with his tour of West Africa, and continuing, often at the same whirlwind speed, through nearly a dozen countries in the Near East and Central, South, and Southeast Asia. Kaplan's ambition is to describe "the general state-of-the-world," and he proceeds from a premise that mixes Huntington's idea of clashing cultures with his own conviction that cultures, and their politics, are formed largely by the immediate physical environment. What this means is that he approaches human societies with something of the attitude of a wildlife biologist.

The tone is set in the opening African chapters. "Africa is nature writ large," Kaplan opines, and he goes on to say, "It is almost certainly not accidental that Africa is both the poorest and hottest region of the world." Moreover, Africans, while their gross domestic productivity declines, are reproducing at a frantic clip, undeterred by epidemic rates of AIDS (two out of three of the H.I.V.-positive cases in the world) and malaria, and by a plague of violent crime. When Kaplan finally talks with an African, a Liberian refugee who approaches him in the Ivory Coast, he writes, "I warmed to his eyes. Their aspect was Western—just barely, though." And when he visits this man's home, in a refugee camp, he sees "only passivity, fatalistic and defeated in the oppressive heat," and he writes, "The stillness presaged, it seemed to me, cataclysms to come."

Kaplan presses on—Africa, he says, "has to be confronted"—and soon he is driving through a forest, a realm of "indefinable wildness," which inspires him to speculate that "perhaps, the forest had made the war in Liberia." If this reminds you of the "sun people" and "ice people" theories popularized by the Afrocentric City College professor Leonard Jeffries, it should. "In the forest there are no horizons," Kaplan explains. "You cannot see more than a few feet ahead, so you are in fear of surprise. You are prone to excitable rumors. The slightest pinprick or jab may lead to panic. In other words, in the forest, where one's view is blotted out by every manner of tree and creeper (each containing its own 'spirit'), men tend to depend less on reason and more on superstition." It never seems to occur to Kaplan that what he calls superstition *is* reason in the forest. He is too busy seeing what he came to see: the horror, and the amazing creatures who inhabit cities like Conakry, Guinea, "a steamy, sprawling growth on the edge of the Atlantic."

To Kaplan, Conakry symbolizes "the new strategic danger"—that is, an incubator for global epidemics, which threatens "a disease breakthrough far more serious and likely than the Russian army breaking into Europe." When he spots "a cute, miraculously healthy looking teenager," he marvels: "I smiled back at what I knew to be my genetic superior." And he goes on like that, through country after country, declaring that "geography is destiny," and looking to explain everything from the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to the Khmer Rouge slaughter in Cambodia as an expression, for better or for worse, of the physical terrain at least as much as of the cultural and political landscape. Along the way, he tabulates assorted statistics on population density, poverty, environmental depletion, and human migration to bolster his view of impending apocalypse.

In the final pages, Kaplan abandons the possibility of a "general solution" to the "complexity and apparent hopelessness" he has described, and writes of his nostalgia for the Cold War as a "happy interlude" of coherence in "the themeless violence occurring elsewhere in the world that we now focus on." The white man's burden still rests heavily on him as, near the end of his journey, he gazes at the strange beings who inhabit Cambodia—"those buttery, cocoa-brown faces . . . bearing an archetypal forest-spirit quality, enhanced by eyes of such smiling brightness that each face was like a charity poster." Kaplan assures his American readers that such suffering faces "are closer than we think." But Kaplan has done everything in his power to render them completely alien, and his chief complaint

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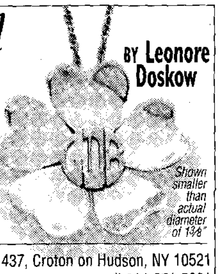

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about the troubled world is "*We are not in control.*"

Is this a lament, a warning, an invitation to more active engagement? When Kaplan first published his portrait of Africa as an irredeemable catastrophe in *The Atlantic Monthly*, the article was much discussed in State Department circles, where it was taken very seriously as a call to cordon off Africa with a strategic quarantine. Now he has included much of the rest of the non-Western world in his zone of incomprehension. Yet, as Kaplan flies home to Washington from his travels, he muses, "We are the world and the world is us"—a notion that reduces the gravity of the violent social and political transformations of our times to a vacuous inanity.

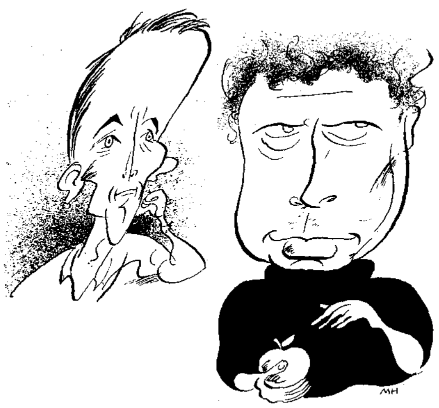
WHEN Melville wrote of Typee, he was, of course, holding up Polynesian life as a mirror to the civilization from which he came. From one remote valley of a South Sea archipelago he was able to project a recognizable world, and deliver a pointed commentary on the anxieties of his age. "Let the savages be civilized," he wrote, "but civilize them with benefits, and not with evils." Today's global books tell us instead that the West is in danger of becoming uncivilized; yet, in the effort to be everywhere, and to describe a universal condition, these impatient books describe a nowhere, inhabited by nobody. What is global? There is no such address. Proceeding from generality to generality without providing convincing access to the particular, these books serve merely as symptoms of the age they propose to diagnose; they are selling fear more than understanding.

The world is a malevolent place, crowded with people prone to viciousness. These are givens at the end of the twentieth century. Catastrophe surrounds us, and there is no reason to expect an end to it. But isn't this very endlessness the quality that makes the woeful human condition so stubbornly interesting? Rather than bludgeon us with promises of inexorable doom, a truly useful global book would attempt to comprehend why, here and there, a degree of order continues to prevail against the apparent forces of chaos. ♦

COMIC AND ELEGIAC

Two poets and the question of tradition.

BY HELEN VENDLER



Mark Doty and August Kleinzahler

THE names August Kleinzahler and Mark Doty are by now recognized by people who follow contemporary poetry: Farrar, Straus & Giroux has recently published Kleinzahler's fourth collection, "Red Sauce, Whiskey and Snow" ($19), and HarperCollins has issued Doty's fourth, "Atlantis" ($12). Both poets have laid claim to a personal style: Kleinzahler's is astringent, terse, comic; Doty's is elegiac and "beautiful."

Kleinzahler's poems seem to me far more lively on the page than Doty's. You never know how a Kleinzahler poem may jump-start itself. This one is called "The Year of the Key":

> 23.5 seconds
> for the knurled car-
> bide blade
> to pass
> twice, tip to bow
> and back
> biting its cuts in a
> spray of brass

Yes, it's a key being made, but it's also a small packet of linguistic energy, consonants articulating the metal shavings into air. Doty's poems lull themselves into scenic being:

> Tonight the harbor's
> one lustrous wall, the air a warm gray
> —mourning dove, moleskin, gabardine—
>
> blurring the bay's black unguent.

It is easy to walk into a Doty poem, and easier to see its strategy: scene, comment, inquiry, conclusion. The poem leads you by the hand, and is solicitous.

It could seem unfair to compare a comic poet with an elegiac one, and Kleinzahler doesn't always succeed—sometimes he's too fey, or too obscure—but he's alert and he's stylish. A California-earthquake poem is set outside, with a fallen chimney and hovering buzzard-helicopters:

> After the big shake chimney rubble
> at the foot of the block,
> and tributaries of Amaretto and Schlitz
> winding through broken glass
> outside the liquor shop
>
> Then sirens
> and the sky full of helicopters circling
> the vast smoking feed

So far, reading this poem we have met a writer who knows how to look (not an uncommon trait in poets), who can make his looking unsettling (less common), and who can find a lilt, several lilts (the rhythm of the first line's "rubble" is nothing like the rhythm of the third line's spilled liquor). The ability to find several lilts is the least common trait of all: it keeps the stream of sound troubled and rippling. We don't yet know how the author feels about the earthquake. That is revealed at the end, when this outdoor poem moves indoors:

> But the earth continues to wobble,
> and the cat keeps to his odd new perch
> on top of the mantel,
> that same fierce look in his eyes.

Though everything will go on as before, we are newly ready to fight back against nature, even if the wobbly earth holds all the cards. If poetry is meant to delight and instruct, deft implications are Kleinzahler's means of instruction. His means of delight are his light-handedness with language, his willingness to strike up a dance or a tune, his offbeat structures, and his revelling in the comic grotesque:

> —*Are you an* Ex-is-ten-tial-ist,
> *Mr. Mister?*
>
> —*Oh, no, no,*
> *I would prefer to think*
>
> *of myself, ahem,*
> *as a* Collision-Ecstasist.

Collision-Ecstasists are fulfilling Marianne Moore's remark about poetry in "The Past Is the Present": "Ecstasy affords / the occasion and expediency determines the form." If it's true that without Eliot and Cummings, Williams and Berryman, Kleinzahler would not be who he is, it is equally true that he doesn't sound just like any of them. His irreverent joy in the American demotic extends even to his racy adaptation of Catullus:

> Heyho, loverboy
> is that a radioactive isotope you've got
> burning through your shirtfront
> or are you just glad to see me?

Mark Doty can perform an accomplished description—as he does of mackerel, whose "black bands . . . / divide the scales' / radiant sections / like seams of lead / in a Tiffany window"—but then he wants to sermonize:

> Suppose we could iridesce,
>
> like these, and lose ourselves
> entirely in the universe
> of shimmer—would you want
>
> to be yourself only,
> unduplicatable, doomed
> to be lost?

And the tics of style we associate with Elizabeth Bishop are everywhere: the interpolated exclamations, the self-conscious queries, the corrections of perspective. A book or so back, Doty had a Ouija board and a cup-planchette just like James Merrill's. Now he has a seal like Elizabeth Bishop's:

> A pair of rusty tracks
> curve up out of the harbor—
>
> a railway arriving from the bottom
> of the sea? . . .
>
> And some days,
>
> only when I am not looking,
> a slick brother head
> watches from between the lapping,
>
> mirror waves. He is whiskered,
> placid, and keeps his distance,
> lone ambassador
>
> of the marine.

Doty also has a lighthouse that is, like Bishop's, a preacher, but while hers was saying something Calvinist and minatory, Doty's is a self-help helper. It says:

> *Here is the world you asked for,*
> *gorgeous and opportune. . . .*
>
> *What will you do with it?*

Doty's many elegiac poems make one want to sympathize, to go along, to warm to the work. And sometimes one can. It is a relief to hear him burst out against "the current wisdom" for AIDS patients, like his partner, as "bright hope, the power of wishing you're well":

> I swear sometimes
> when I put my head to his chest
> I can hear the virus humming
>
> like a refrigerator.
> Which is what makes me think
> you can take your positive attitude
>
> and go straight to hell.

But even in this bracing passage the rhythm seems inert: the defiant "you can take your positive attitude / and go straight to hell" is not markedly different, in rhythm, from "I can hear the virus humming / like a refrigerator." The "black unguent" of Doty's narration smooths out pangs, smooths out anger in its wish to be, above all, graceful.

Of these two poets, Kleinzahler is the one who is using the medium to its fullest, not only in weaving the fascinating textures of his verse but also—like all epigrammatic poets—in getting the maximum out of the minimum. Here, in its entirety, is his poem "Disclosures":

> You're figuring it out, one
> bit after another,
> as each veil
> drops to earth like a leaf.
>
> This is the lupine shoot,
> this is the weed,
> this the love withheld,
> and here,
> half a life after,
> where the trigger's
> released.
>
> The pattern discloses itself,
> the dance,
> insect-simple:
>
> appetite, decay,
> growl and suck.

"Disclosures" is a poem about the passage from innocence to experience—the oldest of lyric themes. Its first half is all tradition (veils, leaves, flowers and weeds, unrequited love), and the second half is almost all brutal modernity (a gun, the mindless evolutionary compulsions of insects, the primitive responses—to growl, to suck—of mammals). The poet cannot leave tradition behind entirely: he still wants to call the painful schooling of the intelligence into a soul by its old name, "the dance." Yet by its juxtaposition with insect life the Yeatsian dance is placed in the context of mating dances and direction dances, the genetic programming in a standoff with the old dream of a providential choreography. And Kleinzahler implies all this without resorting to Doty's plaintive didacticism. His is, I think, the better choice. ◆

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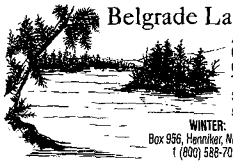

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BRIEFLY NOTED

JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE FLIES AND OTHER TRAVELS, by Aldo Buzzi; translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein (Random House; $23). Signore Buzzi, a Milanese architect in his eighties, is a sort of latter-day Pliny the Elder—a noted professional moonlighting as an essayist with a hearty appetite for miscellanea. Where he diverges from his forerunner is in a taste for brevity, and the result is this delicate volume whose curious contents want to burst the binding. Here we learn—in "Chekhov in Sondrio," which originally appeared in these pages—that the Russians referred to their chamber pots as Yakov Andreyich (James, son of Andrew), that Chekhov loved to call his wife "my little cockroach," and that Verdi, when he visited St. Petersburg, brought along a hundred small bottles of Bordeaux. The translator gets the gentle brio of Buzzi's prose just right, and we're happy to tag along through a brimming landscape of food, books, bidets, and pretty waitresses.

NO INTERMISSIONS: THE LIFE OF AGNES DE MILLE, by Carol Easton (Little, Brown; $29.95). The dances that de Mille choreographed for "Oklahoma!" in 1943 transformed American theatrical dance, but that triumph had been preceded by decades of struggle. This absorbing narrative follows de Mille through professional dead ends and emotional disasters, all the while keeping track of what she was learning, so that we can understand the sources of her idiom and recognize her contribution to the vocabulary of dance as we know it today. Easton also presents a vivid picture of the persistent belittling and bullying experienced by working women during de Mille's lifetime.

GERMANY UNIFIED AND EUROPE TRANSFORMED: A STUDY IN STATECRAFT, by Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice (Harvard; $35). An important behind-the-scenes account of how East Germany was folded into West Germany at breakneck speed—an event that precipitated the demise of the Soviet Union. The authors, both of whom served on the National Security Council in the Bush White House, persuasively argue that, far from being a passive bystander, the Bush Administration was actively involved in stage-managing the dénouement of the Cold War. They also argue that the historic opening of the Berlin Wall, in November, 1989, was actually the result of a bureaucratic error.

BATTLE'S END, by Caroline Alexander (Knopf; $23). What became of the nine black Florida State football players Alexander tutored in 1981? That's the question she tries to answer in "Battle's End," largely by letting the players tell their own stories. Three went on to the pros, and two went on to prison. At Florida State, they had complied, within their abilities, with the demands of the system, and only one of them became for the coaches what Alexander calls "the embodiment of some existential nightmare"—that is, a football player who was "big, brawny, black, talented, and apparently uncomprehending of his position in the hierarchy of power that was supposed to regulate the relationship between them." These men, now in their thirties, reflect with stern, scathing modesty on the shapes of their lives. This book is not about fate but about accommodation, and is all the more moving for that.

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THE THEATRE

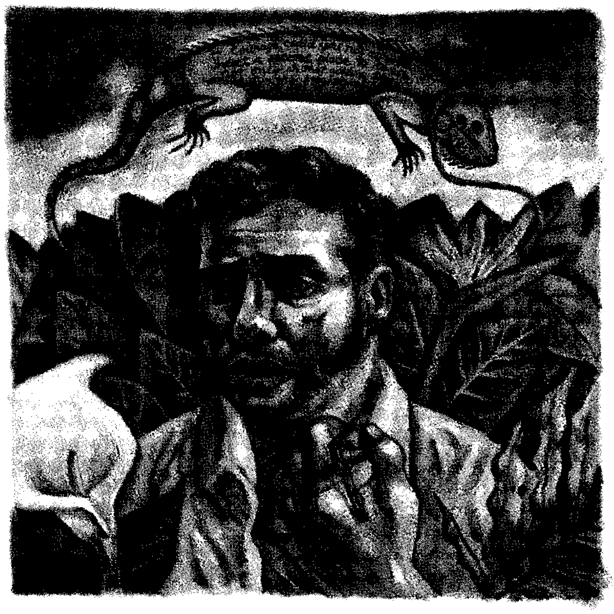
PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

The Roundabout does justice to "The Night of the Iguana."

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

Tennessee Williams's "The Night of the Iguana," which is now in revival at the Roundabout under the direction of Robert Falls, was inspired by Williams's own experiences in Mexico in the summer of 1940—a summer, he wrote in the *Herald Tribune* in 1961, a few days before the play opened on Broadway, "which I remember more vividly, on the emotional level, than any summer that I have gone through before or after." Williams was then in his late twenties and at the beginning of his career. It was a period of physical and mental suffering for him, and he did not expect—or particularly want—to live to see the end of the summer, but finally his death wish vanished, and, he wrote, "I not only discovered that it was life that I truly longed for, but that all which is most valuable in life is escaping from the narrow cubicle of one's self to a sort of veranda between the sky and the still water beach (allegorically speaking) and to a hammock beside another beleaguered being, someone else who is in exile from the place and time of his heart's fulfillment."

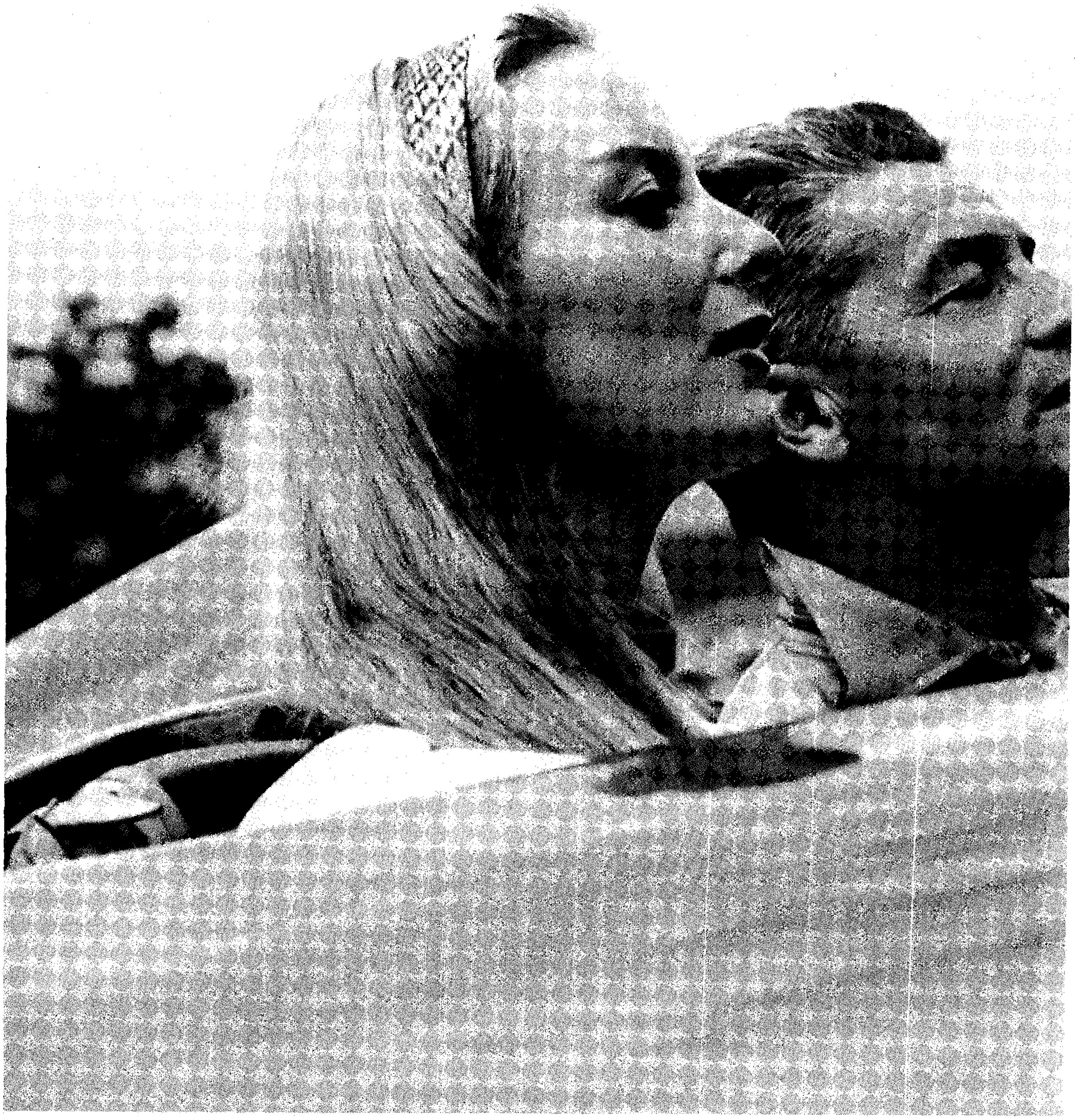
Williams's essay is a clear statement of the feelings and circumstances behind the play, but it's no clearer than the play itself, which presents Williams's quest for spiritual redemption in full flower. In that it's out of step with the world today, "The Night of the Iguana" could not be more timely. (It's the world that hasn't dated well.) The play doesn't need to be reinterpreted for a new generation; its ripe simplicity requires only that it be presented by actors and a director who are in sympathy with, rather than fashionably embarrassed by, the nakedness of the author's spiritual longings. The Roundabout production, which was first seen at Chicago's Goodman Theatre in 1994 (Falls is the Goodman's artistic director), meets that requirement so thoroughly that its imperfections don't detract in any significant way from the play's power. In any case, the idea of perfection is inimical to Williams's view of life: flaws make the man.



Something holy wrestling to get out: William Petersen as the Reverend T. Lawrence Shannon.

ELIZABETH OTTENAKA

The play is set outside a rustic hotel called the Costa Verde (a real place, where Williams stayed in 1940), high above the sea on the Pacific coast of Mexico—a kind of open-air theatre, where life and death at their most elemental and immediate are played out. Young boys lounge around strumming guitars, or catch iguanas and fatten them up for the kill; the hotel owner, Maxine (Marsha Mason), is sleeping with her employees just weeks after burying her husband, Fred, who was a sport fisherman and died from a blood infection caused by an errant fishhook. This is where three pilgrims convene: the Reverend T. Lawrence Shannon (William Petersen), an Episcopal minister who was expelled from his church in Virginia for fornicating with a young Sunday-school teacher and now wanders the earth as a leader of bus tours; Hannah Jelkes (Cherry Jones), an artist and "a New England spinster who is pushing forty," as she describes herself; and Nonno (Lawrence McCauley), Hannah's grandfather, who, at ninety-seven, is "the world's oldest living and practicing poet," though he has not finished a poem in twenty years. Hannah and Nonno, each equal parts puritan and huckster, travel the world together, paying their way with her sketches and his recitations. They have run out of money, but instead of going home, to Nantucket, they have come to this warm place by the sea, so that Nonno can be near the "cradle of life" and can at last finish the poem he's been working on. (Nonno's full name is Jonathan Coffin; Williams had paternal ancestors named Coffin, who were early settlers of Nantucket.) Shannon, feverish and fed up with his busload of Texas church ladies and a young woman who has made him slide once again to the end of his rope, has come to the Costa Verde to rest, but, of the four main characters, he has the farthest still to go. Petersen makes Shannon's agony visible and believable—and urgent. He is by turns charming and selfish, gentle and cruel, sincere and sarcastic, and yet his moods never seem capricious—you feel that there is something holy in him that is wrestling to get out. In contrast, Cherry Jones's Hannah presents a placid front: she's someone who has come to terms with what she calls "the blue devil" and Shannon calls "the spook." Jones, who was startlingly memorable last year in "The Heiress" (people still talk about the way she wafted down the staircase at the beginning of the first act), wears a beatific half smile through most of the play, and, though she is herself pushing forty, she seems too young and pink-cheeked for this role. Her acceptance of the world comes across as ready-made and angelic, not hard-won. (Deborah Kerr, who played



STALEY-WISE GALLERY

OUT FOR A SPIN *Eliette and Herbert von Karajan (1954), photographed by Horst, whose long career is being celebrated in shows at*

town (through June 2nd) and the Staley-Wise gallery (April 19th to June 1st).

the part in John Huston's 1964 movie version, had already pushed beyond forty, and her face was able to reveal a layer of disappointment under its genteel composure.) In this production, Jones, like a can-do Girl Scout, carries Nonno onto the stage when they arrive at the hotel, but the play calls for no such heroics—Williams had the character simply push him on in a wheelchair. Still, Jones has about her a quiet gravity that matches Petersen's entropic flailing in its force. Marsha Mason has taken a drubbing for her performance as Maxine, who is supposed to be a "stout, swarthy woman in her middle forties—affable and rapaciously lusty," but I thought she was just fine. She doesn't have the big-cat, womanly magnetism of her predecessors (Bette Davis, Shelley Winters, Ava Gardner), but her instincts are nevertheless catlike, on a smaller scale: she's acutely aware of the vibes between Shannon and Hannah, and she's free and confident with her body.

Nothing human was alien to Tennessee Williams, and nowhere is this better illustrated than in "The Night of the Iguana." The Roundabout production does the play justice; to use Williams's own words again, "it will reward you, finally, with a puzzle which is still puzzling but which, whether you fathom it or not, still has the beautifully disturbing sense of truth."

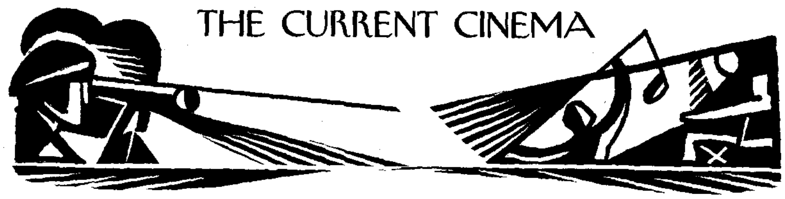
THERE was exactly one good thing about "Getting Away with Murder," Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's criminally awful "comedy thriller" at the Broadhurst, which got the death penalty after seventeen performances: the logo for the show was a crouching gargoyle holding a pistol, and after the show's closing was announced the newspaper ads showed the gargoyle holding the gun to its head. This was the lone instance of wit anywhere near the show, which, under the direction of Jack O'Brien, had all the subtlety and appeal of a game of Fifty-two Pick-Up. ♦

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER PUNCTUATION

[*From the Times*]

The three games will not all be played on New Year's Day let's do parens here and use the em dashes later in the piece, where they're abolutely the right choice.

THE CURRENT CINEMA



THE BAD SOLDIER

Jonathan Lynn's "Sgt. Bilko," and the passing of Krzysztof Kieślowski.

BY ANTHONY LANE

As I marched into a screening of "Sgt. Bilko," a question tugged gently at my mind: "Why bother?" Ninety minutes later, I lumbered out without having come close to getting an answer. Over the last decade, Hollywood has been jabbing its snout into the trough of old television shows, the fodder of the fifties and sixties and seventies, and the rummaging hasn't ended yet: this year promises "Mission: Impossible"; and a new version of "The Saint," starring Val Kilmer, will begin shooting soon. Life is too short for anyone to get stressed about these updates; after all, if Kilmer can manage to animate any portions of his face below the eyebrow line he can only be an improvement on Roger Moore. There is nothing holy about the TV of the past, and our remembered childish devotion to a classic should not render it untouchable; on the other hand, the decision to raid the tomb of "Sgt. Bilko" does look like a folly of the first order—not sacrilegious, just deeply unnecessary.

For one thing, let's get the name right: the original wasn't called "Sgt. Bilko"; it was called "The Phil Silvers Show." It was a Silvers-tongued creation: it belonged to the guy, and to snatch it away from him now makes as much sense as trying to recast "I Love Lucy." Love is not love that an altered Lucy finds.

The lucky winner of the Bilko role is Steve Martin. The fact that his gifts are actually more elastic and unfettered than those of Phil Silvers is, sadly, of limited assistance. From his first appearance in the movie—and the camera holds back from him for a while, ratcheting up the suspense—Martin makes it plain that there will be no attempt to do a Silvers. This is surely the right move: no Roman-senator pate, no black-rimmed spectacles with bottle-thick lenses, but merely Martin's standard bristled shock—and it *is* a shock—of bright white hair. The trouble is that, among other things, he makes an even less plausible soldier than the original Bilko did. You could just about imagine Silvers as the kind of worldly survivor who would find and feather his nest in a big, rather bloated peacetime Army; his passing resemblance to an accountant, or even to the trusted manager of a small rural bank, somehow strengthened the illusion, and made him even more of a threat to surrounding wallets.

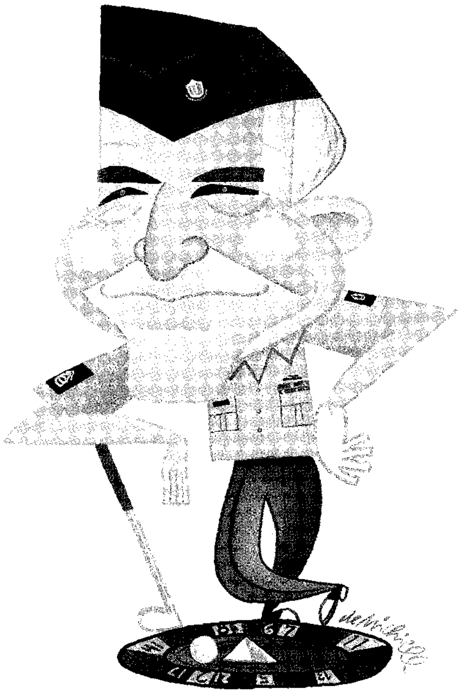
But if "Sgt. Bilko" is a sorry sight, that has surprisingly little to do with Steve Martin. The movie looks kind of sorry for itself; you get the impression that it gave up hope even before it started. No one expected the writer (Andy Breckman), the director (Jonathan Lynn), and the producer (Brian Grazer) to put their hearts into the project, but they might have taken the trouble to put their heads together, or their pens to paper, and devise a respectable structure to support the central figure. As it is, the story line of this full-length "Bilko" would have barely passed muster as the subplot of a single TV episode; it's as thin as tissue paper, and you can't even blow your nose on it. There is the weak, chubby Colonel Hall (Dan Aykroyd), and there is the cruel Major Thorn (a dull Phil Hartman), an avenging angel looming out of Bilko's past, who tries to shut the base down and to steal Bilko's fiancée, Rita Robbins (Glenne Headly). Bilko foils him, as you might expect, but not with guileful patter—the only weapon that the character once required. Rather, Lynn, in his wisdom, has opted for a techno-joke: a newly developed, top-secret hovering tank, which Bilko alone can transform from a white elephant into a thundering success. Cue some remarkably low-grade special effects; as the tank wobbled and shimmied unconvincingly before my eyes, I felt the spirit of American comedy slip from its seat, lower its head in shame, and head for the exit.

In a way, the tank was useful: it targeted and brought into focus the hopeless indecision that tends to weaken these TV-imbued movies. Should cinema revel in the retro look, or should it modernize the details for the sake of an audience that is often too young to be in thrall to the ancient shows? In thirty years' time, when some hollow-headed executive decides to remake "NYPD Blue," will he turn Sipowicz into a lean, whippy bastard with a laser-guided firearm, or will he jokily go with the old-style fat guy, as distant as Henry VIII? Don't ask the makers of "Sgt. Bilko" to help out on this one. They plump, on the one hand, for a smiling fifties innocence (Glenne Headly has to sport little white ankle socks, poor dear) and for TV-style wipes between scenes. On the other hand, there are mentions of Stormin' Norman and the Gulf War: "We still haven't gotten over being left out of Desert Storm," a rueful Bilko says. And the proposed closing of the base is a reference to current defense cuts in the aftermath of the Cold War. But Bilko's heart was warmed by the gusts of the Cold War. It was a time when the nation lifted its proud eyes and fixed them firmly on a common foe—a time when it should, of course, have been watching a certain motor pool all along. An unsupervised Bilko is a terrible thing.

He is the only character created in modern times whom Molière would have been proud of. Molière rather than Ben Jonson, I would say: there was nothing fantastical or electric in the words that rattled out of Bilko's mouth, and many of his lines were not in themselves especially funny, yet Silvers's delivery told of a man who could no more curb the excesses of his covetous core than a dog can disdain its supper dish. He tested and proved the Molière theorem that vice in small quantities—or a choice selection of minor vices—is wretched and sour, but that the clamorous gush of a single iniquity can be so pure and triumphal, so comically consuming of a man's soul, that it smashes any onlookers with the force of a heroic virtue. Silvers's manner was a quite unrepeatable blend of the crooning and the imperious; like Jack Benny, he panned and prospected for money, and knelt before its semi-sacred power, but he also went much further than Benny in pumping other people to cough the stuff up.

You get a fresh taste of this in an early scene of the film, when Steve Martin lifts his nose, savoring the air, and declares, "Can't you smell it? It's money." Martin has a fine touch for such delicate desires, and I couldn't help thinking of his fire chief in "Roxanne," waving an adoring schnozz in the direction of Daryl Hannah. But such fluting, Osric-like idiocy strikes no more than a single sweet note in the full, orchestrated mania that Martin is known to be capable of. He is (or once admitted to being) a wild and crazy guy; the appalling certainty that nobody in the movie audience—or, even better, in his live audience—knew where he was heading next, or whether his brain and his body would be able to hammer out an agreement on the matter, was demonstrated in glorious form by the half-male, half-female walkabout in "All of Me." Who else could have starred in a movie called "The Man with Two Brains" and made the title look like a libellous understatement? Some of the lines in that picture seem to burp out of Martin's mouth as if he were a medium, reluctantly receiving distress calls from a pissed-off ghost. Hence the trailing, somewhat lonely tone of his later work: from "Parenthood" onward, we have always known where Steve Martin is going. In the two execrable "Father of the Bride" movies, we have watched him slope in the direction of a heartfelt domestic peace; and now, in "Sgt. Bilko," we see him glumly save his job and his sweetheart without ever pausing to take stock of the lunatic possibilities that used to flower around him.

Every now and then, something stirs. When Bilko plays dumb at a poker game, pretending to be a novice ("Oh, goody, I get to play cards!"), or when he takes the men to Las Vegas and cries at the sight of it ("It's just so beautiful"), you hear the certifiable strains of the Martin madness. Whether they are right for the character is another matter; where Silvers gave us a one-track obsessive, Martin hints at a freak who will always enjoy his lyrical riffs on the allure of money—or on love, for that matter—far more than the cash itself. His comedy has always been egged on by a warped and oddly uplifting romanticism, whereas the real Bilkos of this world leave us skinned and floundering with their ground-level ruthlessness. Maybe Jonathan Lynn and his team knew this all along; hence the embarrassing moments in the movie where minor characters, as if charged with the fruitless task of promoting what they know to be untrue, pay tribute to their leader: "He's like a God," "It's like watching a magician," and so on. Saddest of all is Bilko's own boast, trembling with desperation: "No wonder they call me a Master Sergeant." They do?



You're in the Army now, wild and crazy guy: Steve Martin in "Sgt. Bilko."

The death of the film director Krzysztof Kieślowski, who succumbed to a heart attack on March 13th, came more as a shock than as a surprise. There had been one previous attack; Kieślowski came from Poland, and Poles, among their many accomplishments, really know how to smoke. But there is something brutal in the loss of Kieślowski: many fall at the peak of their powers, but few have the humility to wonder how much those powers are worth. "It's not an honorable profession," Kieślowski once said of moviemaking. But he took it up, and stayed with it, and refused to buckle either under the threats of the Communist censors or under the blandishments of his later success. Wry, gloomy, and blessed with that odd tough-headedness that traditionally marks out the mystic, Kieślowski made his dirty profession a touch more honorable by his presence.

To Kieślowski devotees, his work demanded not just respect but a brand of faith—you had to believe in the coincidences that chimed through his plots, in the atmosphere reeking of spiritual intent. To Kieślowski agnostics, what was most infuriating was not so much his high mind as the Machiavellian chill with which he manipulated the loves and deaths of his characters. But look at his greatest achievement, "The Double Life of Véronique," the tale of two identical but unrelated young women—one Polish and doomed, one French and very much alive. The movie now feels to me like a love story, as if Kieślowski were tracking the mysterious signals sent out between strangers. That hardly makes him an engineer of human souls, although, on the evidence of "The Double Life of Véronique," he was certainly drawn to the presence and migration of the spirit. How else can one read the impossibly graceful moment of the Polish girl's death, when the camera flies up, away from her body and over the heads of a crowd?

In 1994, after completing "Red"—the last work in his "Three Colors" trilogy, and an ominous, Prospero-like fugue on fading magic—Kieślowski announced his retirement. His fans hoped that he might show a touch of the Sinatra syndrome and make a rapid comeback. Kieślowski had better things to do: there was a load of cigarettes to burn, for a start, and rumors told of a serious Black & Decker tool collection. But the craftsman did return to the fray, as if his gifts were nagging him. At the time of his death, he was planning a new trilogy, this one on the subject of Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell. No other modern filmmaker could have faced that grand Dantean trip without fear, and without fear of pretension. Kieślowski himself had lived through the purgatory—the endless black comedy—of a totalitarian state, and he, in turn, put some of his characters through hell. Yet his movies flash with fire, with unbidden hints of transcendence. The very model of a great European worrier, he observed, "In a world like this, you've got to have *some* beauty." Heaven couldn't wait. ♦

MUSICAL EVENTS

DAWN ON THE ROAD

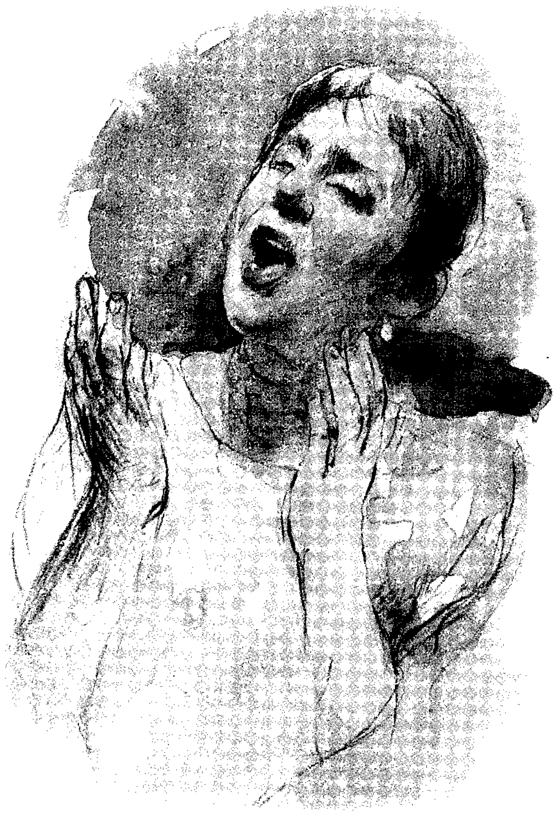
Recitals and a new disk take us on a singer's journey.

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

THERE are singers who know how good they are, and there are those who still always want to be better. Dawn Upshaw's membership in the latter category has never been in doubt. Because she strives to go further, she takes risks, and because she lives dangerously she achieves her most distinctive quality, which is the quality of being distinctive, of dismantling the general—that is, technique—in order to reveal the individual and thereby present not so much the figure of a singer as the figure of a person singing. Three concerts at the 92nd Street Y last month showed many aspects of that person, but most of all candor—in how she sang and how she'd arranged the programs.

Ms. Upshaw evidently wants a recital to be something more than an evening of fine music, and certainly something more than an opportunity for self-display: that much was evident from the programming of this "Voices of the Spirit" series, given on Lenten Wednesdays, and offering each time a miscellany of mostly sacred settings concluding with a Bach cantata. The assembling of so many Psalms, lamentations, and pietistical urgings brought a worry of puritanism to the concerts, but it was a worry almost completely dispelled by Ms. Upshaw's open, unassuming manner and by the collegial atmosphere she engendered, partly by inviting other singers to join her, and partly by being herself: an artist who seems to be singing not so much to us as on our behalf. She doesn't deliver the music; she takes us with her on a journey toward it.

Her abstention from technical support for the voice is important here. Where most singers can shape recalcitrant words into a unified phrase, moderating how different vowel sounds impose different vocal colors, Ms. Upshaw enjoys the spikes and awkwardnesses of words showing through. This means that how she sounds depends, to a quite unusual degree, on what language she's singing in. When the possible vowels are relatively few and homogeneous, as in Italian, Latin, and French, her line is relatively smooth. But the vowels of English, especially, can call out—and, in the absence of diverse vowels to do that, Ms. Upshaw will sometimes add them, to achieve a line blowing with assorted colors, as she did in the long melisma on "where" near the beginning of Purcell's "The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation," which was the best thing in the first program. Her variety of timbre, right up to the edge of uncontrol, suggests an expression being made in an extremity, whether of joy or hurt, and the prominent vowels allow the words to speak through and in the music, even when the singer's tone has a bell-like clarity and vibrancy. This may be how Ms. Upshaw creates a sense of freshness in what she sings. We seem to be witnessing the music bursting forth—out of a feeling, and from a text it hasn't quite yet mastered. Music's ideal, which is to subsume words, is put off into the future, and that's one way Ms. Upshaw gives the sense of being on a journey, of leading or prompting her audience to take the same route.


Dawn Upshaw: character and daring.

She does that, too, by being so personal, and so personable. The quality of her singing may change with the language, and her style will, of course, be nuanced by consideration for the music: one admirable feature of these concerts was their range, from the Baroque to the modern, with not much in between. But, whatever she sings, the distinctiveness remains, and with it the vocal character she conveys, which is that of someone wide open to experience and also of someone who comes from the same world we do. This was part of what made her performance as the Angel in Messiaen's "Saint François" at Salzburg four years ago so touching—this sense of the heavenly messenger as a person who might have stepped in from the office next door.

Peter Sellars, who directed that production, was one of the friends invited to take part in this series, and his contribution was to stage Ms. Upshaw in Bach's penitential solo cantata "Mein Herze schwimmt in Blut." The idea was a mistake. Whether the gestures were quasi-natural (a beating of the breast, a casting of the eyes skyward, a dejected return to a chair) or artificial (stiff movements with the hands, floor exercises), they were redundant, and the costume designed by Dunya Ramicova—a mauve gown with a long raspberry scarf tacked onto it, so that the poor performer could bind herself into situations of humiliation—was modishly false. The drama had come during the previous ten minutes, when Mr. Sellars—as if directing a first rehearsal—took us through the cantata, making sure we knew how poignantly it was going to speak to a modern sense of alienation ("Erwartung" was mentioned, also Beckett), and dispatching one-liners ("Only Bach could write a ten-minute aria about not being able to speak") while maintaining an utterly serious demeanor, so that those of us who laughed or smiled were wrong-footed. All that was left for Ms. Upshaw was a long trial by embarrassment—but she wouldn't be the artist she is if she weren't prepared to expose herself in such a way.

The biggest pity of the "Mein Herze schwimmt" performance was that the posturing got in the way of the music—both for the audience, as a distraction, and for Ms. Upshaw, as a temptation to overemphasize, since a body hurled about the stage can't but sing in a different way from one that's still. However, Mr. Sellars at least helped us identify a problem that had arisen at the start of this concert, when Ms. Upshaw was joined by Lisa Saffer, using her high soprano with childlike glee and agility, in Couperin's third "Leçon de Ténèbres." The performance was fine: beautifully spun by the two singers, deftly accompanied by Arthur Haas (on a chamber organ that looked like an elaborate chocolate) and the cellist Myron Lutzke. The difficulty was one of mismatch with the concert hall, which implies a visual focus on the performers, as opposed to a church setting, where the musicians will be off center. One wanted them off center here; certainly one wanted Ms. Upshaw (as she may well have wanted herself) off center in the Bach. "Mein Herze schwimmt" is, to be sure, the voice of a soul in torment, but it becomes more powerful by far when we only overhear the voice, and don't have the agony mimed in front of us.

A lot of sacred music should, similarly, seem to be coming from offstage, which may be why many of the most successful items in the concerts were those in secular form. I've already mentioned Ms. Upshaw's dazzling and moving performance of Purcell's song of Mary's self-interrogation. There was also a strikingly strong account of Bernstein's "Lamentation," by Lorraine Hunt, who just stood there, arms by her sides, and shook the air with singing of vehemence married to warmth. Best of all was the second half of the last program, where Ms. Upshaw showed again what an exceptional Messiaen singer she is. Excellence springs, no doubt, from admiration. "I find Messiaen's language," she wrote in the program, "to be so overwhelmingly personal, and so suggestive of a heightened spiritual perspective: if anyone has ever written transcendental music, surely this is it."

If transcendence is a total rightness, a perfect arrow shot, then that's what she gave us. Singing French, Ms. Upshaw's voice is always fused into pure flame; the sounds help her to become tight and urgent. Beyond that, she understands Messiaen's exhilaration and his glow, the racing and the stillness at once. After the brilliant helter-skelter of "L'escalier redit" she should have been exhausted. But no. She luminously sang a calmer song, "Amour oiseau d'étoile," and was then fiercely exultant all over again in "Résurrection." A double album of Messiaen's complete songs must surely be a high priority for this much recorded singer.

Her latest solo recording, "White Moon" (Nonesuch), follows a similar course to that of the Y series in assembling Baroque and twentieth-century pieces of various sorts to point a theme, albeit a narrower one. "Voices of the Spirit"—going from Mörike and Wolf to Tagore and Jonathan Harvey, and, even within the scope of Biblical settings, from Bernstein to Harbison—took a capacious view of what the Spirit can say; "White Moon" is centered on songs addressed to sleep and to the moon. But the musical variety is wide, and with repetition one learns to ride over and even enjoy the bump from, say, a pseudo-Renaissance song by Peter Warlock to a Handel aria accompanied by unreconstructedly plush strings. Radical discontinuities are, after all, part of the point of thematic programming, along with the opportunity to touch odd corners of the repertory—like Warlock, or like the Bloch and the Bernstein in the Y concerts, or like the new Psalm settings Ms. Upshaw had admirably commissioned for those concerts from Yehudi Wyner and Anna Weesner.

At the end of the series, after the Messiaen, there was one of Bach's most celebratory cantatas, "Erschallet, ihr Lieder," where Ms. Upshaw was joined by Ms. Hunt again, Richard Croft, and Kevin Langan (enjoying the deep sonority and not-altogether-seriousness of his aria), and by a period-style ensemble that included a crack trio of trumpets. If we seemed now to have our feet firmly on the ground, here was joy, expertise, and good humor. Concerts can't expect to offer more. ♦

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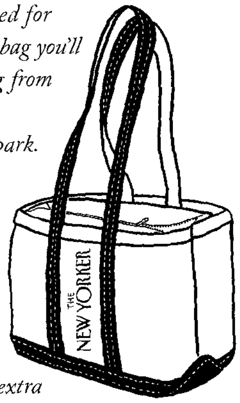

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BY BRUCE McCALL

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Line 1: Last year, I sincerely made* $__________

* If you are a registered or unregistered lobbyist, defense-industry worker, or Archer Daniels Midland Co. employee, or own more than three Holy Bibles, enter your $10,000 Special Bonus Deduction on Line 1A. A deal's a deal!

Line 1A: Special Bonus Deduction: $__________

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Above numbers for tax computation only. (See below)

Line 2: Lay page on FLAT surface. With a ruler and eyes closed, draw a straight line through the row of numbers above. **STOP** the pen or pencil *where it "feels" right. Multiply the number it stops on by 1,000.*

My flat tax is: $__________

This Section to Be Completed Only by Taxpayers Who Have Claimed the $10,000 Special Bonus Deduction

Clip this section and present it at any Republican National Committee office for a VALUABLE FREE GIFT.

Line 3: Taxpayers who earned less than $10,000 in 1996 must in the space provided give an explanation for their low productivity in the greatest economy in the history of the world, in English:

My explanation: __________

(Line 3A to be entered only by taxpayers who have filled in Line 3.)

Line 3A: Your explanation is unsatisfactory. Enter $125 non-productivity surtax: $__________

Line 4: Welcome VIP taxpayers! Please proceed to VIP section 12 after claiming your $200,000 private-jet-depreciation deduction:

Hit me with a deduction of $__________

This Section to Be Completed Only by Taxpayers Who Own Anything in a Quantity Exceeding 100,000

Line 5: Multiply the value of your 100,000 things by the total amount of your PAC contributions in 1996, divide by your total 1996 capital gains.

Enter total here: $__________

If you filled in Line 5, you are eligible to deduct the full amount and to join the President for a fun-filled B.Y.O.B. evening of poker at the White House.

Line 6: TO BE COMPLETED ONLY BY TAXPAYERS NAMED HILLARY. I agree to complete this return in a well-lit public place before at least 12 witnesses, with my hands on the table at all times. (Note: Hair care is no longer a deductible business expense.)

Sign here: ____________________

Line 7: Charitable Deductions. This section of the return is now closed for renovations.

Line 8: You are eligible for a $12,500 refund, or a new American-made Saturn with auto. trans., a/c, ww, airbags & ABS, if you can complete 5 of the following 7 Taxpayer I.Q. sentences correctly.

1. Guns don't ______ people, people ______ people.
2. Gays in the armed forces would _____ civilization as we know it.
3. Liberals wholeheartedly ______ welfare cheats.
4. Liberals wholeheartedly ______ family values.
5. "I had a ______ time at the New York lesbian night club."
6. The minimum wage is an ______ around the neck of American business.
7. Women should ______ their place.

Line 9: To be answered by all Hispanic citizens and resident aliens: My (circle one) Sibling/Parent/Friend illegally entered the United States at or near _________ on (Month/Day/Year) __/__/__ and is currently residing at (Street Address) ________ (City) ________ (State) ________. By providing this information, I understand I am eligible for a $2 deduction on my 1996 federal income tax.

Claim deduction here: $__________

Line 10: Taxpayers with assets of $1,000,000 or more are eligible for a special CONFISCATED CUBAN CIGAR GIVEAWAY to be held at the U.S. Customs Humidor in Miami, Fla., by lottery, dress informal. Complete the section below:

☐ Yes! Count me in! Every confiscated Cuban
I puff is another $5 out of Fidel's pocket!
I prefer: Cohibas/Montecristos/H. Upmanns (circle one).

Line 11: Taxpayers with assets of $5,000,000 or more are eligible for the oil-depletion allowance. If the oil in your car's crankcase is depleted by more than one pint, enter a deduction of $100,000.

The dipstick doesn't lie. I claim $__________

FILL IN DEBT ESTIMATE, WIN BIG PRIZES

Line 12: Fill in the space below with your estimate of the exact amount of the national debt as of 12 midnight, April 15, 1996. The taxpayer who comes closest will win a LIFETIME TAX PARDON. Sorry, only VIP taxpayers eligible.

My guess is: $__________

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